

HUBERT DE SEVRAC,

A

ROMANCE,

OF THE

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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By MRS. ROBINSON.

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VOL. II.

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# HUBERT DE SEVRAC.

## C. H. A. P. I.

"As love alone can exquisitely bless,  
"Love only, feels the marvellous of pain;  
"Opens new veins of torture in the soul,  
"And wakes the nerve where agonies are born."

YOUNG.

A VARIETY of events, rapidly succeeding each other, strongly tended to enlighten and expand the mind of Mademoiselle de Sevrac. Educated under the sombre shade of superstition, and in her childhood, when the mental faculties are scarcely seasoned to resist the distorted impressions of erroneous opinions, hourly blinded by the lessons of a bigot, she had yielded to their influence; and the pernicious tenets of her *bonne gouvernante* were by her deemed infallible. But the path of Adversity leads to the abode of Truth: all the delusions of life vanish as we approach the threshold, where Philosophy reposes, and smiles at the distant chaos of folly and superstition.

VOL. II.

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The instability of worldly splendour had been ascertained by the exile of the Marquis and his family. The virtues, which are sometimes to be found in the humblest class of mankind, were exemplified by the jailor, Latour, and the peasant, Giovanni; the ostentation and insolence of wealth were evident in Ravillon; and the hypocrisy which insults religion, glared through the mask of sanctity worn by the Abbot Palerma. Mademoiselle de Sevrac, having always lived in a circle, where, to *seem*, and not to *be*, was the task of universal labour, fancied that the art of pleasing was more useful than the toil of thinking; and the smile of an approving multitude more gratifying, than the sober commendation of conscious integrity! but when the tongue of flattery was silenced by her change of situation, the voice of Truth began to fascinate her ear, and as the colour of her fortune assumed a darker shade, the light of intellect expanded! till her senses, no longer dazzled by false splendour, received impressions, less gaudy, but more distinct and lasting.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac, having progressively contemplated characters so opposite, began to look with doubt and suspicion on every object that approached her. Having in her infancy believed too much, she could now with difficulty be induced to have faith in any thing. The extreme of credulity is generally succeeded by the most obstinate scepticism; while the happy and consoling medium is only to be explored, by the united powers of reason and experience. The outline of human virtue is easily delineated:

Humanity

Humanity inspires the heart to throb with pity, and to dilate with justice, towards our fellow creatures; while Instinct, Hope and Nature, every thing we feel, and every thing we contemplate, instruct the soul to worship the Divinity!—All the lessons of experience; all the treasured lore of schools; all the labours of pedantry, and all the craft of priesthood, can teach no more!

The vacuum which superstition had left in Sabina's mind, before it had time to welcome a substitute which should be the offspring of reason and reflection, was wholly occupied by her mournful and hopeless regret for the loss of St. Clair. She resigned her soul to melancholy, and resolved to devote the remainder of her days to the memory of his virtues. The suggestion of Palma wore too many traits of probability, to afford a single hope that it was erroneous. St. Clair had parted from Mademoiselle de Sevrac in a state of extreme agony: he had proved, for Love is wonderfully keen sighted, by every look and action during his residence at the Chateau-neuf, that she was the object of his affections. If he meditated the desperate plan of forcing her from her parents,—if he sought to sever those links which form the pleasing chain of social life,—Sabina still considered herself as the cause of those effects; and he had by the forfeiture of his existence, expiated the enormity of his conduct. She had taught herself to believe St. Clair the most perfect of mortals; she found that the human heart is not infallible; and



while she pitied the frailty of the man, she could not forbear to lament the rashness of the lover.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac, whenever a gleam of reflection pervaded her mind, tacitly confessed, that were St. Clair still alive, his conduct would be unpardonable. But the tenderness, which was cherished by regret, could not refuse that pity, which would no longer be dangerous. She could mourn for him dead, though she could not have pardoned him living; for we seldom have resolution to condemn a beloved object, whose errors seek to hide themselves in the oblivion of the grave!

The remorse which had long weighed heavily on her conscience, respecting her oath, was removed by the death of the younger Ravillon. She now believed him to have been the person who had compelled her to make it, and who dropped the letter, which St. Clair had found at Montnoir. She also attributed to his persecution, the assault which the Marquis received in the wood, near the Chateau-neuf; the supposed miracles, which excited her consternation, and abused her reason, at the convent; and the proposal, which, concealed under the mask of holy admonition, came from the mouth of the Abbot Palerma. Her conscience being exonerated, she was so completely ashamed of her former weakness, that she had not resolution to make the Marquis acquainted with the secret; and supposing, by Arnaud's death, that all danger was at an end, she thought it unnecessary to incur



cur their father's displeasure, or stigmatize her own understanding.

The Marquis's health continued to improve daily : his strength began to return, his wound healed rapidly, and his thoughts settled into a calm and pensive mood, apparently the result of that philosophy which is the offspring of experience. The Abbe Le Blanc, whose wisdom was equal to his virtue, failed not to console de Sevrac's mind with the reiterated lessons of hope and submission. A few books, which they borrowed from the neighbouring monastery, and the conversations which naturally occurred on political subjects, united to pass away their long wintry evenings, till the Marquis should once more be in a situation to travel.

The only person who frequently absented herself from the little circle, was Mademoiselle de Sevrac. At the break of day, she never failed to quit her chamber, and to wander, no one knew whither. The Marquis sometimes questioned her on the subject ; but she assured him, that she always strolled within sight of home, and that she found her mind considerably relieved by her excursions. He once pressed her to say how she passed her time when absent. " You take no books," said the Marquis ; and the ravages of winter must present a dreary sameness, little calculated to please a youthful mind. Why do you feed your thoughts with melancholy scenes ? Perhaps the returning spring will afford some change of political events, which will combine with Nature's smiles to animate your heart, and to wean it from the memory of

objects, which ought not to influence its feelings!"

"Never!" replied Sabina, bursting into tears.

"Despair is criminal," cried the Marquis, "where the object that excited it, was unworthy."

"And what is that, which can only derive happiness from the misery of millions? Is it virtue?" said Mademoiselle de Sevrac. The Marquis was silent.

"Pardon me, sir," continued Sabina, "I wish not to offend you! But if you will put questions to the heart, you cannot wonder if that heart will answer you."

"I can trace your thoughts, through all their varying mazes," said the Marquis; "and though I can admire philanthropy, I can sigh when I contemplate a scene of persecution: I can sicken at beholding torrents of human blood; and can shudder with horror when I hear the groans of dying victims."

"Anguish the most acute, is preferable to lingering misery," replied Mademoiselle de Sevrac. "The persecution to which you allude, is neither new nor augmented. The curtain which has long concealed the scene, is raised; and the axe of vengeance succeeds the tortures of the dungeon! No more!"

"But where shall justice exercise her function, while the laws continue to be violated and broken?" said de Sevrac.

"Laws, that owned no code, but in the bosom of a despot, were the mere mockery of freedom," answered Sabina. "Time was, when

when the few were happy, and the million wretched! when virtue, valour, genius, and humanity, bowed at the foot-stool of ignorance and pride! when palaces rung with festivity, and dungeons groaned with victims! when folly feasted to satiety, and honest labour starved! Malice or caprice, then, had power to scourge the suffering multitude, or awe them into silence. Who could redress them?—the throne was barricadoed by the nobles; and the bastille —”

Here Mademoiselle de Sevrac suddenly stopped. The Marquis seemed too sensibly penetrated by what she said, to admit of her proceeding. She tendrily embraced him.—“Sabina,” said he, after a moment’s struggle, “your reproof is just. I had no right to scrutinize your heart. I ought to have known that it is incapable of falsehood.”—The Abbe Le Blanc joined them, and the conversation ceased.

The grave of the murdered stranger, though the object of Mademoiselle de Sevrac’s thoughts sleeping and awake, had never been the theme of her conversation. She knew that the Marquis flattered himself with the hope that St. Clair was still living, and cautiously avoided making any discovery that might deprive him of so slender a consolation.

Monsieur de Sevrac in less than a month, recovered sufficiently to leave his chamber, and to accompany his daughter in her rural walks; while the Abbe Le Blanc pursued his studies, and Madame de Sevrac arranged the domestic concerns, or prepared the evening recreations. Sabina had apprized Francisco of the Marquis’s recovery,

covery, and had requested that, in case they should meet, he would not mention the murder, lest it should affect his sensibility too much ; he having been also wounded in a similar manner.

This precaution, which was too weak and childish, not to excite suspicion, was nevertheless observed by Francisco, whose penetration was sanctioned by self-love, in what he believed to be the true state of circumstances. He imagined, from the rank and deportment of the Marquis, the gentle and amiable manners of Madame de Sevrac, the virtues of the abbe Le Blanc, and the agitation of Sabina when he first met her at the Cimetière, that it was an affair of honour ; in which the lover had fallen a victim to the resentment of the parent. These opinions were strengthened by the wounded stranger's having been conveyed to the auberge by a friend ; whom Francisco concluded to be a second in the rencontre. Events of this kind frequently taking place on the borders of Fuscany, the venerable monk considered the matter as irreparable, and only lamented its cause as a necessary evil. Duelling was one of those problematical points, which the solitary Francisco was not prepared to examine : for, conscious that he should not seek to offend, he had never meditated on the propriety, or impropriety, of shedding the blood of an aggressor.

It was at the close of a clear and beautiful winter's day, that the Marquis and Sabina were returning home, when, as they passed the Cimetière, the neatness and solemnity of the place attracted de Sevrac's notice. He stopped abruptly, and turning out of the path, which wound towards the valley, instantly entered that which led to the consecrated inclosure.

As



As he opened the little gate, the sun, just sinking behind a distant mountain, reflected its last rays on the melancholy spot ! The grass was glittering with dew ; and the broad boughs of surrounding cypress were gently waved, by the cold breezes that descended to the valley. The only sounds that interrupted the sacred solitude, were the feeble vibrations of a bell, which rang for vespers at the adjacent convent ; and the indistinct murmur of a cataract, which perpetually fell from a neighbouring precipice.

The whole of the scene was soothing and romantic ! But there was one object which immediately caught de Sevrac's eyes. It was more adorned than every other : it was strown with fresher, greener branches, and encircled with small twigs of osier ; which, bending over it, formed a woven canopy, to prevent the slips of evergreen being scattered by the wind. It was the grave of the murdered stranger.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac trembled as they walked towards it. Her eyes were turned from the rude monument, which she had dally strewed with rosemary and myrtle, and fixed intently on the features of the Marquis. He glanced lightly over the frequent heaps of mould, till he came to that, which Sabina most wished him to avoid : there he stopped. The sensations of her mind at that moment were terrible !—Fancy pictured the pale and mangled bosom ; the ghastly and shrunk visage ; the once warm and throbbing heart ; which now mouldered, only separated from them by a thin space of earth, unconscious of their visit. They had stood for some time, the Marquis's eyes riveted on the grave, when he broke the silence :—



"How singularly, how neatly is this grave decorated!" said de Sevrac with a sigh. "The spirit, whose dust sleeps beneath this fragrant canopy, cannot but be grateful for the trophies which sympathy has scattered so profusely. This is, perhaps, the resting-place of a fond parent; or a darling child, whose filial affection is aided by the approving bosom of nature!—Perhaps these verdant offerings were sprinkled with tears of unavailing sorrow. Poor emblems! you will for a time be fresh and fragrant, but you will fade, like the cold reliques you adorn!"

Mademoiselle de Sevrac turned aside, to conceal a tear which stole down her cheek. The Marquis, who was too deeply rapt in meditation to observe it, continued—

"Peace be to thy soul, whatever thou hast been! whether thy days were winged with joy, or darkened by affliction! whether thy early bloom of life, was blasted; or thy thorny wreath of care, storm-drenched by adversity, bowed to the dust with age! Thou hast a sweet grave, to grace thy poor remains! thou hast not died unlamented! there lives some kind and gentle being, who watches over thy ashes, and haunts thy narrow cell, with unremitting tenderness!"

As De Sevrac spoke, the crimson light of the setting sun softened into a less glowing lustre; and, before he had time to make another comment, it had entirely faded from the landscape.

"So is it, with prosperity!" said the Marquis. "It gleams on us for a moment; and, when it fades, leaves nothing but a source for gloomy meditation.—Oh! peaceful, silent grave! thy cold inhabitant feels not the pangs of sensibility!"

The

The storm howls over thee, but he hears it not !  
The sun-beams gild thy borders, and the un-  
wholesome dews of night sprinkle thy turf ; yet,  
they excite no joy, they menace no evil !”

“ Let us return home !” said Mademoiselle de Sevrac with a faltering voice. “ The evening air is keen, and the mists are rapidly descending from the mountains.”

“ For thy sake, my love, I will depart,” replied the Marquis, taking Sabina’s hand, and turning from the grave ; “ yet, I think that I could stay here for ever !”—He paused a moment—“ Yes, for ever !”

At this moment Francisco entered the cimetiere, and hastened towards them. “ Bless you !” cried the venerable man. The Marquis bowed with respect and complacency. After a short interval, Monsieur de Sevrac addressed the monk : “ Father,” said he, “ I have been contemplating this neat and simple grave ! The pains that have been taken to shield it from the inclemency of winter, excite my curiosity.—What was the person, to whose memory this little tomb is consecrated ?”

“ He was a traveller,” replied Francisco.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac was alarmed and agitated. She knew that the monk would shrink from the idea of uttering a falsehood ; and she trembled at the Marquis’s inquisitive curiosity.—He continued.

“ And how comes it, that his grave is more decorated than every other ?”

“ A stranger adorned it, before sunrise,” replied Francisco.

“ A relation ?” enquired Monsieur de Sevrac.

“ Not

"Not that I know of," answered the monk.

"What motive could a stranger assign for such attention?"

"Pity," replied Francisco.

"It is singular," said the Marquis, "that pity should take such pains for a person unknown!"

"In the busy world, it may be so," replied the monk; "but with us, who live in mountain solitudes, nothing is more common. Pity, Signor, is the child of nature! and when the phantom which assumes her title, denies a tear to the sad and persecuted wanderer, the impostor is discovered; and, beneath the specious veil of pity, we behold the monster, ostentation."

Monsieur de Sevrac, though he listened earnestly to Francisco's sentiments, still bent his eyes upon the ground.

"A stranger's grave!" said he; "and so honoured by a stranger! 'Tis very singular! Of what country was the deceased? What was his rank in society?"

"I never sought to know," replied Francisco.

"I had not power to preserve his life, or means to celebrate his memory after death. I could not serve him, and he never injured me; what right then had I, to pry into his story? It is a base and barbarous curiosity, that probes the wound, which it has not skill to heal."

This keen reproof silenced the Marquis, and relieved Mademoiselle de Sevrac from the most painful anxiety. As they took leave of Francisco, "I will see you early in the morning," said de Sevrac. They parted.

Sabina, as soon as she could find an opportunity, stole from her domestic circle, and hasten-

ed.

ed to find Francisco. She plainly perceived that the Marquis's mind was strongly tinged with suspicion, and she apprehended that the certitude of St. Clair's death would nearly annihilate him. That the monk's conscientious integrity would be equal to De Sevrac's penetration, was unquestionable: the one was not to be bribed, or the other hood-winked. Alarmed, afflicted, trembling, yet almost desperate, she hastened towards the convent of Francisco.—It was situated not far from the cimetière, at the foot of a mountain, where its small belfry was almost concealed by a thick grove of firs, and its wicket ever open to the passing traveller. Its low roof was nearly covered with ivy, and before its threshold a shallow brook flowed with a melancholy sound. Beneath its gothic porch, a spacious seat invited the weary to shelter, and to rest; while the woven branches of vine, which covered the walls, promised a repast, refreshing, though not sumptuous.

As she entered the solitary abode, she could not help contrasting it with the spacious and lofty habitation of the Abbot Palerma. She proceeded through a dark passage which led to the *refectoire*, where a long oak table was spread with the evening's meal. It was composed of grapes, brown bread, and water from the brook which flowed before the entrance of the Convent. No blazing hearth enlivened the gloomy apartment; no brilliant tapers displayed the scanty meal. One little lamp shed its blue light over the table; and the spacious chimney was decently arranged with boughs of mistletoe and holly.

Mademoiselle



Mademoiselle de Sevrac stood several minutes contemplating the surrounding objects. How different was the *refectoire* of the mountain monastery, from the splendid halls and luxurious banquets of Versailles ! The contrast gave birth to a thousand melancholy ideas, till she was roused from her reverie, by the voices of the monks in the adjoining chapel, which was simple and gothic ; a plain crucifix being its only decoration.

She approached the door, and listened. The fraternity was composed of ten monks, all venerable men. Francisco observing Mademoiselle de Sevrac, sent one of the brotherhood to request that she would wait. " We are performing mass for the soul of the murdered traveller," said he. " Francisco will soon be at leisure to attend you, Lady." Sabina sunk on her knees at the threshold of the chapel, and never was devotion more pure than that which she felt at this awful moment. The eternal repose of St. Clair, was the object of her intercessions ; and her zeal was only to be equalled by her sorrow.

Francisco, at the conclusion of mass hastened towards Sabina. He found her bathed in tears and exhausted with affliction. He raised her from the ground with a respectful tenderness : " Lady," said he, " this is unseemly sorrow. The soul of him, whom you lament, I trust, is with the blest. He who shed his blood, whatever was the cause, is most an object of our pity. Pray for his repentance, Lady ; but weep no more for the ill-fated stranger. So cut off in the plenitude of mortal frailty, Heaven will be mild in judgment !"

Oh



" Oh ! he is happy ! " cried Sabina, " at least I hope he is, for he deserved to be so "

" You knew him then ! " said Francisco starting. Mademoiselle de Sevrac was overwhelmed with confusion.

" He was your lover ? " — continued the Monk.

Sabina shrieked ! and bathing Francisco's hands with tears yielded to the anguish of ungovernable sorrow. " Be secret," said she, " I conjure you to be secret. In a few days I shall depart ; I shall intrude on you no more. But if your heart can guess the cause of my distraction, Oh ! guard his dear remains ; watch, that no sacrilegious hand disturb his ashes. I shall not long survive him : and when I leave this world of sorrow, my last request shall be, to sleep in the same grave. Then, my good Francisco ! you will know my melancholy story. I will leave it, written for you : It will penetrate your heart, and you will often wander near my solitary bed to drop a tear of pity ! "

The venerable Monk was subdued by the power of sympathy. He led her to the porch ; he begged permission to attend her, but she refused his offer. " Alas ! Francisco ! " said Mademoiselle de Sevrac, " a being so unfortunate cannot have any thing to fear ! " She was not far distant from home ; therefore, as it grew late, after again enjoining the Monk to secrecy, she quitted the monastery, and proceeded thither.

Francisco was now convinced in his own mind, that all his conjectures were well founded. He had daily observed Mademoiselle de Sevrac hastening before sunrise to the cimetiere ; but he had never



## CHAPTER II.

" Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swell'd,  
 " And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erspread,  
 " At last the rous'd-up river pours along :  
 " Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,  
 " From the rude mountain and the mossy wild,  
 " Tumbling thro' rocks abrupt, and sounding far—

THOMPSON.

THE night was stormy, the wind howled from the mountains, and the swollen torrents rushed with impetuosity towards the valley. : Mademoiselle de Sevrac had quitted the Convent an hour after the close of day ; and at midnight, no tidings of her, had reached her family : the Abbe Le Blanc by various excuses had amused the Marquis, who concluded that she was in her chamber ; till the anxiety of Madame de Sevrac, which was no longer to be concealed, roused him to demand an explanation.

With a degree of affliction, bordering on despair, Madame de Sevrac unfolded the alarming intelligence. A messenger had been dispatched to the Convent, another to the village in the valley, and a third to the great road leading to  
 Caffagiolo.

Cassagiolo. But their researches proved fruitless; she had neither been seen nor heard of, and the result of their enquiries only tended to encrease the apprehensions of the whole family. The sudden storm had augmented the cataracts to so dreadful a degree, that they had overflowed many parts of the country, and in their irresistible force had borne every thing before them.

Monsieur de Sevrac was wild with affliction: he concluded that Sabina had lost her way, and in the elemental strife, had perished. He fancied that he beheld her struggling with the foaming waters; or, faint and exhausted, engulfed by their overwhelming eddies; and he reproached himself for that too easy acquiescence, which had permitted her to wander so often unprotected. The Abbé Le Blanc, with a peasant, again traversed the road that led to the valley: none of the villagers could give any account of her; for few had quitted their habitations, to brave the violence of the tempest.

The shrill blasts continued to yell over the mountains: the rain beat hard; and the resistless torrents roared over their lofty barriers. So terrible a night had never been remembered by the peasantry. So agonizing a situation had never been experienced by the Marquis and his two remaining companions.

Madame de Sevrac had wept, till the fountain of grief was exhausted, and her anguish, at length, became unutterable. Time stealing on, and the tempest continuing to howl, with unabating force, Monsieur de Sevrac, who had been detained by the entreaties of the Abbé Le Blanc, determined to seek after Sabina, to find her, or to return no more! The frenzy of a fond parent's



rent's heart, spurns the aid of reflection; occupied by the misery of regret, for the object torn from him, he believes that all the consolation of life exclusively centered in its existence. He looks with indifference, if not with disgust, on every distant prospect; and cherishes no idea, that is not connected with the memory of the treasure he has lost.

Monsieur de Sevrac, having obtained a lantern from one of the messengers who had just returned from the Convent, rushed forth like one deprived of reason, and resolved to brave the fury of the elements till the returning dawn should seal his destiny, or restore to his bosom the solace of his misfortunes.

The first place he flew to, was the abode of Francisco. The poor, but pious monks, were at prayers in their little chapel: their door was unbarred, for, in such a night, they had no inclination to close it against the wretched. Monsieur de Sevrac was not heard till he presented himself before them. His countenance was wild and ghastly! The rain had drenched him, the wind had dishevelled his hair, and the anguish of his soul gave him the appearance of a maniac.

Francisco hastened towards the Marquis, who, for some time, had not resolution to speak. He gazed around him with inquisitive horror! and after an agonizing struggle exclaimed in broken accents—"My child! my child!"

"What of her?" said the terrified Monk. "Is she not found? Several messengers have been here to enquire after her, and I told them, that she departed an hour after the close of twilight. Heaven grant, that she may escape the fury of the tempest!"

Monsieur



Monseigneur de Sevrac turned hastily from him, and as though grief gave strength in proportion as it augmented, darted out of the Convent; Francisco followed. The Marquis rushed with hurried steps along the winding mazes of the valley. At every rapid stream that roared along, he stopped, and beat his bosom. He knocked at every cottage, still calling on his daughter, and still unsuccessful.

Having searched, in vain, in all the paths that wound through the valley, he crossed the upland meadows. The rain ceased to fall, and the moon gleamed forth with a faint and watery lustre, at times wholly obscured by black and impervious clouds, which were borne swiftly along by the impetuosity of the wind. He continued to call upon his child; but his voice was lost in the shrill blast, and he was hastening towards a precipice whose dizzy brow hung over a foaming gulph, when the light of his lantern presented the gate of the solitary cimetière.

Francisco, whose feeble age had not strength to keep pace with the speed of Monsieur de Sevrac, had followed him by the glimmering ray of his lantern. When he saw him stop at the cimetière, he hastened forward, and reached the gate as the Marquis advanced among the heaps of mould, where he perceived the white dress of Mademoiselle de Sevrac: he rushed towards her, and beheld a sight that almost annihilated him with horror!

She was sitting by the side of the stranger's grave, her arm encircling the little cross, and her eyes raised towards the clouds that passed over the valley. Her hair hung on her shoulders to her waist, partly covering her bosom which

was

was drenched by the midnight tempest ; her cheek was pale, and her hand almost petrified ; she had laid her cloak upon the grave, as if to guard it from the storm ; and, fixed, like the image of despair, seemed wholly insensible of everything that approached her.

The Marquis threw himself on his knees and clasped her to his bosom, repeatedly kissing her wan cheek, and conjuring her to answer him. But she was not conscious of his caresses : grief weighed heavily on her senses, and the faculty of thought was deadened by its pressure.

With the assistance of Francisco she was raised from the ground, and, supported between him and the Marquis, led towards home. She was feeble and exhausted ; no sound escaped her lips ; all circulation seemed to subside in her veins, and she suffered herself to be guided, without knowing to whom she was indebted for protection.

As they descended towards the valley, the sky began to clear, and the dawn presented a group that would have extorted a sigh from a bosom of adamant : the fond and frantic de Sevrac, leading his daughter, whose countenance but too plainly bespoke the misery of hopeless affection. Francisco wept : his mind had none of that vaunted stoicism, which philosophers pretend to feel, but which nature glories in disclaiming.

Madame de Sevrac, who was waiting with the Abbe Le Blanc at the casement of his chamber, watching the return of day with eager eyes, equally anxious for the fate of a distracted husband and a darling child, when she saw them approaching, fainted in the arms of her kind and faithful companion.

Sabina

Sabina was conveyed to her bed; where the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac sat by her pillow, till she fell into a profound sleep, and they once more began to hope that Heaven had not wholly abandoned them. Mademoiselle de Sevrac continued tranquil many hours; but it was not possible that any of the family should be prevailed on to take rest. The Marquis's mind was occupied by various conjectures respecting the cause of Sabina's extraordinary conduct; the despair which could invite her at such an hour to so melancholy a spot, he considered, as deeply rooted; and, however averse he had been to the idea of prying into the cause of her despondency, he could not resist the impulse of curiosity which she had at length awakened.

As soon as Mademoiselle de Sevrac was asleep, the Marquis hastened to find Francisco. His interrogatories were of so pressing a nature, that the monk could scarcely refuse to answer them. He conjured de Sevrac not to question him on a subject of such importance; and assured him, that the secret should be held as sacred by him, as though his life would be the forfeit of a disclosure. Every word which Francisco uttered increased the Marquis's curiosity; a thousand conflicts struggled in his breast; as his perturbation augmented, the monk endeavoured to evade his questions, till urged by entreaties, and terrified by Monsieur de Sevrac's wild and impetuous demands, he requested him to be patient and to hear him. "Neither your anger nor your fault shall induce me to betray you," said Francisco. "Your secret shall never pass these lips: therefore tranquillize your mind, and depart in peace."

"What

"What secret? what fault?" cried the Marquis earnestly.

"A parent's right is unquestionable," continued Francisco. "But when youth and innocence bend to an early grave, the sternest natures cannot refuse a tear of pity."

"An early grave!" repeated Monsieur de Sevrac. "I do not comprehend you!"

"I have done," replied Francisco; "here let the matter rest. The tears which your daughter has shed, will wash away your stains; as the blood of your victim has appeased your resentment."

"The blood of my victim! Father, I entreat you to be explicit," said the Marquis. "Bring me the man who can accuse me of injustice, and let him demand redress."

"Alas! He sleeps in the grave!" said Francisco. "No mortal power can recal him from his solitary bed!"

"Whom do you mean?" cried de Sevrac; while his cheek grew pale, and his eyes gazed earnestly on the monk, who turned from him in the most extreme agitation.

"Speak: I charge you to speak," said the Marquis grasping Francisco's arm. "To whom do you allude, and of what crime do you accuse me?"

Francisco was silent. He trembled at the indignation of Monsieur de Sevrac, while he endeavoured, by evading his questions, to keep the promise made to Sabina.

"Father Francisco," said the Marquis sternly. "I respect your age; and I honour your sanctity. But reasons of such infinite importance to my fame and my repose compel me to demand



mand a full explanation, that nothing less will satisfy me. If you know any thing that can sully my reputation, or impeach my humanity, you are bound by every law, human and divine, to divulge it." The monk would have departed, but Monsieur de Sevrac still held his arm.

"You do not answer me," continued the Marquis. "It is easy to suspect; but it is base to calumniate. The holy life to which you are devoted, teaches good will and charity. How then can you deviate from the principles which you pretend to inculcate; and thus boldly stigmatize with crimes, the man who never injured you?"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Francisco. "I bear you no ill will; I pity you!"

"Why do you pity me?" cried Monsieur de Sevrac with increased irritation. "That I am unfortunate, is certain. Yet while my honour is unsullied, I am above pity."

"Alas! I mean not to offend you," said the monk, as he wiped a tear from his venerable face; "Perhaps I was mistaken, and you were not the person."

"Good father," cried Monsieur de Sevrac with a broken and agitated voice, "I entreat you not to torture me with this barbarous suspense, but to answer me one question."

"I wait your will," replied Francisco.

"Then tell me," said the Marquis, "whose corpse lies buried beneath that turf, which you said a stranger had decorated?"

The monk turned from him: his feeble frame shook with convulsive agitation. "Oh, God!" exclaimed de Sevrac, "are these the dealings of christianity? Is it the office of a feeling heart, to drive

drive a fellow creature to despair? Father Francisco, I stand upon the margin of a precipice; the gulph below is terrible! another step will plunge me to perdition!"

"Be calm!" cried Francisco. "The turbulence of rage, is seldom the companion of innocence. If you are wronged, you will of course feel self-acquitted; if not, forbear to rail at me, and try to make your peace with Heaven! The censure of the world pierces not the heart, before which truth has placed an invulnerable shield! Neither can the adulation of the deluded or the base, draw from the mind, the sting of conscious infamy. It is therefore folly to overstep the bounds of reason; or to hope, that by a clamorous defence, you can pour conviction into my bosom. I have no right to condemn; and still less inclination to punish. I participate in your sorrows; I lament that they are of such magnitude; but I have made a solemn promise, which I cannot, dare not violate. Therefore be satisfied."

"To whom have you made the promise?" said Monsieur de Sevrac.

"To your afflicted daughter," replied Francisco; "Her nature is more ingenuous than yours, and therefore I am bound to fidelity; for such is the pride of the human mind, that those who have courage to trust, are generally trusted: while the cunning which aims to deceive, is always exposed to the machinations of deceit."

"Sabina!" exclaimed the Marquis, clasping his hands in an agony of grief, "Is it possible that she can have betrayed me?"

"She betrayed you not," replied Francisco. "Strange and undefinable are the ways of Omnipotence! Crimes which seemed confined to the oblivion of ages, sometimes come forth, to startle guilty minds. We may hope to hide our deeds from mortal eyes, but the stain of murder fixes in the heart; time cannot chace it thence: its colour deepens with every passing hour, and there is no remedy, but in repentance."

"It is as I suspected!" said Monsieur de Sevrac with a deep sigh. "Sabina's fatal passion for St. Clair, has overcome the claims of filial affection, and a father's hopes are sacrificed to the memory of a lover! Keep but your promise and I shall be satisfied." The monk, with his hand upon his heart, bowed a solemn though silent acquiescence, and the Marquis hastened home in the most painful state of agitation.

On his arrival, he informed Madame de Sevrac that his safety depended on his immediate flight, and that she must therefore, without delay, prepare for the journey. The Abbe Le Blanc wholly coincided with the Marquis; and in the evening of the same day, they recommenced their pilgrimage of sorrow. Mademoiselle de Sevrac was a stranger to the source from whence her father had derived his new apprehensions; and, too weak to investigate their origin, silently yielded to his proposal. Previous to her departure, she wrote a short letter to Francisco, conjuring him to keep his promise inviolate; and to guard with unremitting piety, the ashes of her lover.

Once more destined to wander in search of an asylum, with an augmented portion of grief,  
and

and a diminished fortune, the prospect before them was more dreary than ever. Mademoiselle de Sevrac's mind yielded to despondency ; while every sigh that she bestowed to the memory of St. Clair, planted an additional thorn in the bosom of the Marquis:



## C H A P. III.

"What is this world? Thy school, O misery!

"Our only lesson is to learn to suffer;

"And he who knows not that, was born for nothing."

YOUNG.

THE quantity of rain which had fallen, rendered the roads almost impassible; and the feeble state of Mademoiselle de Sevrac's health, required more than ordinary care in their mode of travelling: added to these circumstances, the cabriolet was in so shattered a condition, that it would scarcely resist the shaking over the rugged roads, and the rapidity of the torrents which frequently foamed across them. The melancholy prospects which occupied the Marquis's mind, and the encreasing despondency of Sabina's, kept them silent; each ruminating on the same painful subject, without either venturing to claim the sympathy of the other.

The agony of Monsieur de Sevrac's heart was considerably augmented, by the supposition that his secret had been divulged by Sabina; for, though he placed the most implicit confidence

dence in the promise of Francisco; he dreaded that the same inadvertency, whether it proceeded from weakness or despair, which had tempted her to betray him, might again be productive of peril, where the object so trusted, perhaps would not have the virtues of the conscientious Francisco. The Marquis was not aware that the whole developement originated in the monk's conjectures; that Mademoiselle de Sevrac had never revealed the real calamity, but, having merely confessed that her lover had perished, she had created suspicions, which Francisco greedily received as truths, because they corresponded with his former surmises.—Thus, when the imagination has conjured up chimerical events, the smallest trait of similarity seems a full conviction that they are real; and, by having cherished the shadow, we soon learn to think that the substance is actually existing.

There was yet another bar to a clear and candid investigation of the event. The apprehension that the tale may be buzzed abroad, and the Marquis called on for his defence: he knew, that in such a dilemma, he could have no chance of escaping; for having no witness by, when he gave the wound, he could not prove that he had been previously assaulted. The Abbot Palerma had assured Monsieur de Sevrac that St. Clair was the person whom he had encountered; and authority so sacred, could not be doubted. Sabina was convinced that the man who murdered Arnaud, was not St. Clair; therefore the Marquis had every thing to lament, and no plea that could afford a ray of conscious acquittal.

The suspicions which tortured the mind of Monsieur de Sevrac, were in some degree authorized by the scene which took place between him and Sabina, when, in the wood near the Chateau-neuf, he questioned her so earnestly respecting St. Clair. The agonies she then suffered, and the vague answers which she made to every interrogatory, left a strong impression on de Sevrac's mind, which the Abbot's information appeared to sanction. Thus, by mere conjecture, the soothing bonds of affection were torn asunder; and two unfortunate beings, each innocent of offence against the other, deprived of that sympathy, which is the sweetest balm to the afflicted bosom.

They proceeded on their journey till past midnight. Their postillion, who, regarded only his own safety, kept on in one regular pace, heedless of the miserable vehicle which he was dragging after him, and which frequently bounded over deep ruts, large fragments of stone, and rapid rivulets, with the most alarming velocity: yet no complaint was uttered, no murmur of discontent broke the profound meditations of the disconsolate family, till they came to a thick forest in the vicinity of Fongebuona, the last post between Caffagiolo and Florence.

The atmosphere being hazy, and the night uncommonly dark, Monsieur de Sevrac descended from the cabriolet, and walked by the side of the postillion. They continued their route for some time, when they quitted the main road, to avoid a deep and rapid stream, which rushed with resistless force from an adjacent mountain, and pursued the track of carriage wheels along a path, which wound through the forest; till, to  
the

the great terror of the travellers, their guide suddenly stopped, and informed them, that he had lost his way and could proceed no farther.

Monsieur de Sevrac, suspecting that the excuse was merely invented, to delay their journey, and thereby to throw them into the snares of banditti, insisted on continuing their route; but the churlish postillion obstinately refused to obey, either the commands of the Marquis, or the entreaties of Madame de Sevrac. Sabina was silent; all situations were alike to her.

"Sancta Maria!" exclaimed the guide, "not for the riches of Loretto would I venture! This forest is surrounded by quarries and precipices; and not only those, but banditti of the very worst description would render every step dangerous."

"What is to be done?" cried Madame de Sevrac, while her heart throbbed with apprehension.

"Even stay where you are, till day-break," answered their guide. "Here we have only the chance of one misfortune; but, by venturing forward, we shall encounter many. I am no desperado: I know when to keep out of danger; therefore, not one step farther will I go, by the holy Saint Peter!"

The darkness of the night seemed to encrease with their vexations. The wind blew cold, and the bare branches afforded but a miserable canopy to shelter the melancholy group. Monsieur de Sevrac proposed advancing alone, and on foot; with the hope that at some hut or cottage, he might procure a light, which would enable them to continue their journey. To this proposition Madame de Sevrac and the Abbe Le



Blanc decidedly objected ; and they were wholly at a loss what plan to adopt, as the most likely to extricate them from their perplexing situation.

Their guide alighted, and wrapping himself in his long cloak, took his seat in the trunk of a tree which lay by the road-side, determining there to repose himself till the return of day. Madame de Sevrac's terror encreased considerably, when she found that the cabriolet was left unguarded ; and after exerting all the powers of persuasion to induce the postillion to resume his seat, in vain, the Marquis detached the mules from the shaft, and resolved to submit patiently, from a conviction that there was no remedy.

They had remained more than an hour in their cheerless solitude, when on a sudden they heard a trampling of horses hoofs, and the sound of mingled voices at no great distance. They seemed to advance but slowly, on account of the rugged road, which was frequently blocked up with trunks of trees, that had been torn from their roots by the recent tempest. The postillion in an instant became alert, and rising from his seat, without uttering his fears, crept under the cabriolet. His alarm communicated itself to Madame de Sevrac ; but the Marquis, who had pistols, having armed himself and Le Blanc, they took their stand before the carriage, resolving to defend the women and preserve their property, or to perish in the contest.

The horsemen advanced : a person on foot seemed to direct their way. "These are not robbers," said the Abbe Le Blanc in a low voice.

voice. They were within a few paces of the cabriolet, when a smothered groan struck new terrors into every bosom.—The Marquis challenged the strangers, but received no answer. “I charge you to stop!” said he. “We are benighted; and, if you are honest men, you will lend us your assistance.”

“What are you?” said one of the horsemen.

“Travellers,” replied Monsieur de Sevrac.

“Pass!” cried the horseman, suddenly turning out of the narrow road, and stopping among the underwood. Again a faint shriek startled Monsieur de Sevrac: he instantly rushed into the thicket, and commanded the stranger to declare whither he was going. “If your purpose be harmless, you will pardon an interruption, which the time and place will authorize: if not, you shall proceed no farther!”

The Marquis had scarcely done speaking, when he heard a female voice articulate, “Oh! rescue me! rescue me!”—The horseman darted forward; but the tangled branches of the underwood prevented his advancing.

All the menaces of danger were now lost upon Monsieur de Sevrac. A female voice, uttering sounds of distress, roused his soul to the most hazardous enterprize; and, notwithstanding the gloom which surrounded him, he advanced among the trees, till he came within a few paces of the stranger. Madame de Sevrac called on her husband, to return. “Le Blanc,” said the Marquis, “guard the cabriolet, and watch that no one passes!”

He had no sooner pronounced these words, than the horseman addressed him, called him by his name, and bid him, if he valued his life, to desist. "This is not thy hour, De Sevrac," said the horseman: yet if you advance another step, that step will be your last."

Monsieur de Sevrac, while the villain spoke, took advantage of the sound of his voice, and placed himself near him. The horse continued to plunge, and the rider to utter the most horrible execrations. The thicket was so interwoven with brambles and wild weeds, and the night continued so dark, that the ruffian had no chance of escaping on horseback: he therefore alighted. Monsieur de Sevrac scarcely breathed, lest he should discover himself: the trunk of a venerable tree was his safeguard, while he waited with eager solicitude for the event which threatened.

The horseman, supposing himself safe, quitted his saddle; and taking a lady, who sat before him in his arms, placed her at the foot of a tree; at the same time uttering, in a low voice, "If you utter a single word, this stiletto shall pierce your heart: I shall not be out of hearing." As soon as he had concluded this inhuman threat, he stole out of the thicket, and left his captive alone with the Marquis.

Monsieur de Sevrac, stooping forward, put forth his hand, and, to his infinite surprise, found it touch a cold, but throbbing bosom. He instantly drew it back, and kneeling at the foot

foot of the tree, in a whisper enquired, "Who, and what are you?"

"Ah! De Sevrac! is it to you that I am indebted for this moment of hope?" said she. "I wake from a dream of horror."

The Marquis was astonished at hearing his name pronounced, and accompanied by such penetrating words. The lady grasped his hand with eagerness that almost seemed convulsive.

"Say quickly!" cried De Sevrac. "Who is the villain that left you here?"

"I know not," replied she. He speaks in a feigned voice, and the darkness prevents my seeing his features.

"Rise! instantly rise!" said the Marquis, "and I will secure you from the ruffian's power!"

"Alas I cannot!" answered the lady. "My feet are bound with chords.—Oh! de Sevrac hazard not a life so precious, with the vain hope of rescuing me! I am guarded by three desperate villains."

"Are they banditti?" enquired the Marquis.

"What they are, I know not," replied the lady, still whispering low, and in accents scarcely articulate.—Every vein in De Sevrac's heart throbb'd with contending agonies; terror, lest during his absence his wife and daughter should be murdered; pity for the distress of the unknown captive; and indignation against the ruffians who had treated her so inhumanly. Two of the men entered the thicket. De Sevrac retreated behind the trees



trees ; and the lady scarcely breathed, while she listened to their conversation.

"Do you think that they are armed?" said one.

"Most likely they are," replied the other.

"The Marquis is brave and resolute : he will not submit tamely."

"If I could once grapple with him, his courage would avail but little. My stiletto has not had so much practice, to fail at last, with darkness in my favour. I like to perform my business handsomely."

"And thou shalt be handsomely rewarded," answered the companion. "But the lady is the object now. Where did you leave her?"

"At the foot of a tree, not ten paces off. My horse will never be able to clear the underwood : brambles and interwoven branches choke up every avenue, and it will be impossible to disengage him."

At this moment a shriek from Madame de Sevrac echoed through the forest.

"Here," said the lady hastily, "take this ring, and save yourself ! Oh ! de Sevrac, leave me to my fate ! I do not fear death, it will release me from sorrow !"

As the Marquis took the ring, the sound of Madame de Sevrac's voice a second time roused him to a decision. He darted through the interposing branches, and hastened towards the cabriolet, which he discovered backed into the thicket, and overset. Madame de Sevrac and Sabina were terrified, but not hurt ; and the Abbe Le Blanc, whose pistol had missed fire, was assisting them to rise, when the Marquis reached the spot.

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The villains had availed themselves of the confusion which they had occasioned in order to facilitate their escape, and in a few moments the clattering of horses' hoofs was heard retreating along the road. Monsieur de Sevrac, almost wild with solicitude, instantly returned to the spot where he had left the lady; but, to his infinite sorrow, she had been removed during his short absence. He called repeatedly, but no one answered. His agony was extreme: he had no clue to discover the mystery, except the ring, of which his grief rendered him wholly forgetful.

While he uttered his distress, and cursed himself for having left the lady, the postillion came running towards him, to say, that the stranger who had travelled on foot had mounted one of his mules, and rode off with his companions, in defiance of all that he could do to prevent him.

"Do you think that you should know the robber?" said the Marquis.

"If I did, it would avail but little," replied the postillion. "I should never have the courage to detect him. We who travel at all hours, and in all seasons, know better than to make an enemy of a cut-throat. They swarm together like bees; and he that affronts one of them, may as well swallow the stilettoes of the whole gang."

"I think they are no common banditti," said the Marquis. "Their voices were evidently disguised, and their language assumed for the occasion. — I only fear that they will destroy their captive."

"I don't

"I don't care what they do, if they will but take care of my mule," interrupted the postillion.

"She knew my name," said the Marquis to Madame de Sevrac. "She addressed me with tender concern! I am at a loss to account for this extraordinary adventure. Her voice was entirely strange to my ear; and yet, when I consider, that she spoke under the influence of terror, that her accents were in a tremulous whisper, how could I have known them, even had they been familiar?"

Their difficulties had considerably increased by their situation—with one mule, their cabriolet broken, and the time still two hours before day-break. The postillion, whose mind was filled with horror and distress, rendered the whole party doubly impatient, by repeating numberless tales of murders and robberies committed in the forest.

"Not far from hence," said he, "beneath the brow of a precipice, there is a cavern, where the peasantry say strange noises are heard, revellings and carousings, and sometimes groans, as if murder was committing. Most likely the lady is conveyed thither."

"Do you think so?" cried the Marquis earnestly.

"If I were but sure, I almost believe I would venture there, to get my mule back again," replied the postillion.

"Is it far off?" enquired de Sevrac.

"Not three hundred paces," replied the guide: "but then there's an ugly cataract to pass, and a steep declivity to descend; besides, the road is as rugged as the path through purgatory; and I don't wish to travel towards hell on this

this side the grave ; I shall have enough of that hereafter."

" You must hope for a better state, where you will find forgiveness !" said the Abbé Le Blanc.

" I wish I could find my mule," answered the postillion.

" If your neighbourhood is infested with such desperate plunderers," said Monsieur de Sevrac, " why do not the nobles take steps for their extermination ?"

" Let them set the example, before they begin to reform others !" replied the postillion. There is only this difference betwixt them :—the nobles take what they please openly, and banditti steal from us in secret ; the one is honoured with adulation, the other menaced with a gibbet."

" Has philosophy penetrated into the very bosom of nature ?" said the Marquis to himself, sighing. " Has oppression expanded the great luminary, Reason, till its beams enlighten even the most uncultivated minds ?"—Then addressing the postillion, " is this the opinion of the poor in this country ?" cried Monsieur de Sevrac.

" How can I tell ?" replied he, " They never dare tell what their opinions are !"

" There lies the mischief !" said the Marquis to himself. " Had the tongues of my countrymen been at liberty, their swords had been unstained with blood ! It is not possible, to shackle the mind, and the body at the same moment : the one will work the emancipation of the other, unless the energies of nature are subdued, and the soul deprived of the faculty of thinking. Oh ! Le Blanc, it was the vast distance between the  
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the court and the people, that deluged France with blood. Where, where could the throne hope for a permanent existence, when its avenues were closed against the pleadings of nature?"—The last sentence was uttered by the Marquis with more than ordinary agitation: his voice was energetic, but every tone betrayed some cause for secret agony.

The Abbe changed the subject, and the banditti of the forest again became the topic of conversation: but their depredations were scarcely objects of terror, to minds which had so long been taught to endure the persecutions of fortune.

The dawn at length arrived; the eastern sky dimly gleamed through the mist of morning, while the surrounding mazes, scarcely visible, rendered the hour chilling and melancholy. Every branch was encrusted with white frost, and every avenue filled with blue vapour. Monsieur de Sevrac looked mournful on his forlorn associates, whose veins were scarcely warmed by circulation, and whose strength was exhausted by fatigue and terror: but his despair was complete, when, on searching the shattered cabriolet, he discovered that the iron box, containing all his treasure, was gone; and with it, every hope of future consolation.

The Marquis, after a pause of several minutes, during which his mind struggled with his disastrous fortune, turning towards Madame de Sevrac, who was dumb with affliction, tenderly embraced her. "It is the will of the Supreme, and we must bear it patiently!" exclaimed he, while his arms enfolded the innocent partner of his sorrows.

"How

"How unjustly are we persecuted!" cried Madame de Sevrac, while her tears fell on his bosom.

"Arraign not the justice of Heaven!" said the Marquis, with an awful and stern voice. "I have long been hood-winked by prejudice; deceived, by early-imbibed and long-cherished opinions. The poisons, which the sweets of prosperity once rendered palatable, now wring my agonized heart; and, as the mist of power evaporates, the tortures of conviction triumph."

"Alas! my Hubert, you promised to be patient!" said Madame de Sevrac.

"I will bear the present; but how shall I forget the past?" replied the Marquis.

"Believe that your high fortune was but a dream of splendour—or, a transient scene of delusive pleasure, merely bestowed to prove its instability."

"Oh! Emily! would to God that it had been a dream, and I had never been awakened to know that it was illusive!" cried Monsieur de Sevrac, leading his wife along the winding path to avoid observation.

"I am now," continued he, "the most unfortunate of human beings! Exiled, poor, and stigmatized with crimes! driven to wander over the earth, unknown, perhaps unpitied! Yet, I deserve it all.

"This is despondency!" cried Madame de Sevrac. "The loss we have sustained by the night's event is not of any great importance, when it is remembered that the sum was only a temporary means of life, which would in a short time have been exhausted. We have only to commence our toil a little earlier. Think of it no more.

more. With a conscience free from guilt, you are yet rich, my Hubert !”

“ A conscience free from guilt !” repeated the Marquis, shuddering.

“ Yes,” cried Madame de Sevrac ; “ examine your own heart, and it will acquit you.”

“ Indeed !” murmured the Marquis, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and his arms folded on his breast.

“ Indeed, I think so,” replied Madame de Sevrac. “ There has been no action of your life sufficiently criminal to draw down the vengeance of offended Heaven.”

“ St. Clair !” cried the Marquis, grasping her hand firmly.

“ St. Clair deserved his fate,” answered Madame de Sevrac. “ He assaulted you ; and, in your own defence, you ———

“ Murdered him !” interrupted the Marquis. “ Emily, do not varnish over my errors ; it will only render them more conspicuous. I am not the faultless being, which your fondness would teach you to suppose me.”

“ To be faultless, is to be more than mortal. Yet, in this world of infamy, those may be denominated good, who are not absolutely criminal,” answered Madame de Sevrac.

“ Heaven keep me from such negative virtue !” said the Marquis with a ghastly smile. “ In the broad circle of society, something more is expected from rational minds, than the mere exercise of our duty.”

“ You think too deeply,” replied Madame de Sevrac.

“ And too late !” sighed the Marquis.

“ Why too late,” continued she. “ Had you begun

begun to think earlier, you would not have been more happy."

"But others would," answered the Marquis.

"Mental happiness is always within our reach, my Hubert!" said Madame de Sevrac, "whether we glitter within the radiant vortex of a throne, or waste our days in the gloomy horrors of a dungeon."

"Ha! dost thou talk of dungeons? Hell, hell opens at that word! Name it no more, unless you mean to drive me mad!"

"Why this sudden inquietude?" said Madame de Sevrac. "You never talked thus wildly, Hubert, till lately!"

"Because, till lately, I never cherished the secret monitor, Reflection. A long series of chastisement, has taught me to investigate the cause. For the Divinity, whom I revere, is just! He slackens not the chain of retribution!"

"Whom have you ever injured?" cried Madame de Sevrac. "Lives there a being who can accuse you of oppression?"

"No! no! he lives not. Would to heaven he did!" replied the Marquis.

"You alarm me, Hubert!" continued Madame de Sevrac. "Your senses are disordered! Grief has at last triumphed over fortitude, and you bend beneath its weight, a yielding victim. Yet your despair is culpable."

"Can I shake off despair with such a load of horror on my mind?" said the Marquis. "Where is that philosophy which can laugh at the stings of conscience?"

"'Tis in your own power to soar above the taunts of fortune! With wild and impetuous passions,



passions, the most celestial abode would seem as dreary and comfortless as the subterraneous caverns of the Bastile."

The Marquis snatched her arm, and grasped it fiercely. His eyes were in a moment wild and savage: his cheek as pale as death. He endeavoured to speak, but his voice faltered for some moments: at length, recovering the powers of articulation, he exclaimed, "The Bastile!" and instantly darted from her, along the path which led to the spot where they had left their companions.

Madame de Sevrac followed him. The postillion and the Abbé Le Blanc, having examined the cabriolet, and finding it so miserably shattered as to be wholly unfit for use, were fastening it with cords when the Marquis joined them. Sabina was sitting on the turf, absorbed in reflection.

"You cannot venture to occupy this vehicle again," said the Abbé Le Blanc.

"Then we must proceed on foot," replied the Marquis sighing. "How far is it to Florence?"

"Not half a post," answered the postillion. "But I can procure you a carriage and horses from Fontebuona, if you will wait while I fetch them; and, perhaps, at the same time I may hear something of my mule."

The Marquis looked at his wife and Sabina. They were languid and wan: he had not power to offer a word of consolation, and his heart was ready to burst, when Madame de Sevrac relieved him by a faint smile of patience.

"Yes, we will walk," said she, assuming a cheerful aspect.

"Yes," repeated the Marquis, taking one arm and folding it within his, while he gave the other

other to Mademoiselle de Sevrac, "we will walk!"

The morning cleared: the sun rose with un-intercepted brightness as they proceeded towards Florence; the faithful Abbé leading the way, and the postillion following with the shattered remains of the cabriolet.

## CHAP. IV.

- "Conscience, what art thou? Thou tremendous pow'r!  
 "Who dost inhabit us without our leave;  
 "And art within ourselves, another self;  
 "A master self, that loves to domineer,  
 "And treat the monarch frankly as the slave.  
 "How dost thou light a torch to distant deeds;  
 "Make the past present; and the future, frown."

YOUNG.

MONSIEUR de Sevrac and his family had scarcely proceeded half a league, when on entering the great road from the skirts of the forest, they discovered the mule which had been taken away by the stranger, fastened to a tree with two zechins lying on the bank close by his side. The postillion eagerly snatched the money and uttered a thousand grateful ejaculations to his saint for the recovery of the poor animal, whose condition bespoke the fatigue by which he was reduced.

This circumstance, however important to the postillion, was still of more consequence to Monsieur de Sevrac: for he was not without hope that their finding the mule, might lead to farther discoveries, and finally to the restoration of his little fortune.

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They looked round with eager eyes, to see if any house was visible, for Sabina began to feel faint for want of nourishment; but no kind of building varied the cold uniformity of the bare mountains and leafless forests. The postillion was occupied in attention to his mule, and in fastening him to the wreck of the ill-fated cabriolet; when the Marquis ascending a little hill, discovered a cottage, which by the smoke rising from its chimney was evidently inhabited.

He flew towards Madame de Sevrac, who had taken her seat on a block of marble by the road side, and was supporting her daughter's drooping head against her bosom. "We will hasten to the cottage," said he, raising the exhausted Sabina, "thou art subdued by fatigue, my love; food will refresh thee, and in the lowly dwelling of simple honesty thou wilt be sure to find a welcome."

"I shall not wait indeed," said the postillion. "My mule is famished and worn down to nothing."

"So is my child," cried the Marquis.

"How can I help that?" answered the surly guide. "Let every man take care of his own and the world will go well enough."

"Sabina entreated the Marquis to continue his route; and assured him that she began to recover, though her countenance contradicted every word she uttered. She took Monsieur de Sevrac's arm, and with tottering steps endeavoured to proceed.

"Only wait, while I step to the cottage for a small portion of refreshment," said the Marquis, while he beheld the languid eyes and livid cheek of his exhausted daughter.

"Not



"Not a minute," cried the postillion. "Look at my poor beast : what will my master say, if I lose his mule by my compliance?"

"Say, it was in the cause of humanity," replied the Marquis, "and he will pardon thee."

"Why that's not altogether certain," answered the guide.

"Then, go where thou wilt," said Monsieur de Sevrac angrily. "For thou hast a soul as impenetrable as adamant !"

"Pay me for my trouble and I will begone," replied the postillion.

"How much dost thou demand ?" cried the Marquis.

"*Venti paoli*\* ; and little enough too, when it is considered that we travelled *e cambiatura* †."

Monsieur de Sevrac would have given the twenty paoli without hesitation, though it was more than twice the sum which he had a right to exact. But poverty is a stern spirit-breaker : it often makes that appear like avarice or meanness, which is the want of power, and not of inclination ; adding a pang to the wounds of adversity, by denying the means to alleviate those sorrows, which the feeling heart never fails to pity.

The Marquis drew from his pocket a solitary Louis d'or, which he presented to the guide, requesting him to change it, and to pay himself.

The sturdy fellow, after examining the gold, and trying it in all the ways that suspicion

\* Twenty paoli is somewhat less than ten shillings.

† After sun-set.

could suggest, returned it to the Marquis; at the same time informing him, that he made it a rule never to take any sort of French money.

During this contest the Abbe Le Blanc had flown to the cottage and procured a little loaf of bread, and a flask of the country wine; which, though of the poorest quality, was the best that the habitation afforded. Sabina drank a small quantity; it revived her, and after a few minutes they again set out for Florence. The broad glare of day which Monsieur de Sevrac only a few hours before so eagerly longed to behold, was now hateful to him: and as the forlorn party approached the splendid metropolis of Tuscany, a total eclipse would have been the most pleasing event that could have happened.

The day became brilliant; the people of the country whom they met as they advanced in the vicinity of Florence, gazed with astonishment at the afflicted fugitives. Madame de Sevrac and Sabina looked like spectres; their features pale and sorrowful, their limbs almost sinking under the exertions of the last twelve hours, and their dresses not only disordered by a sleepless night, but considerably soiled by the over-setting of the cabriolet.

Monsieur de Sevrac, whose form was emaciated by long confinement, and still longer mental sufferings, walked between his exhausted relatives with downcast eyes, and a countenance flushed by the fever of fatigue. The venerable Abbe followed; his white hair waving with every breath of wind that chilled his meagre and sunk cheek; almost petrifying the tear which sympathy bestowed on the misfortunes of his companions. The roads were deep, and the

postillion, lest he should lose sight of them, kept at no great distance; frequently uniting with passing travellers, in the sarcastic ribaldry and barbarous mirth, which the wretched appearance of the fugitives was but too much calculated to excite.

At noon they stopped at a small auberge in the suburbs of Florence. The hostess viewed her guests with no very courteous aspect; for, though her lodgings were poor, her avarice was inordinate: and the travellers while they bore all the traits of fallen nobility, displayed also the blushing confusion of uncomplaining poverty. The shabby habiliments of the whole family, by their fashion and quality, showed that they had once been designed for persons of no ordinary class; and the respectful demeanour of the Abbé Le Blanc whenever he addressed Monsieur de Sevrac, evidently bespoke the rank of his companion.

From a benevolent heart such objects would have extorted a sigh of commiseration. But it is a just remark of a philosophical writer, that, "the external conditions of men, are sometimes confounded with personal qualities, and appear to have the same effects."\* The sordid hostess had no feeling, except that which self-interest prompted; no pleasure which did not originate in the idea of augmenting her fortune: the account which the postillion gave, was not calculated to inspire her with confidence; and the proud silence of dignified distress, afforded no explanation that could gratify her curiosity.

Thus situated, Monsieur de Sevrac and his companions, were obliged to accept the worst

\* Ferguson's Moral Philosophy.

apartments of the worst auberge, in the environs of a gay and splendid city, where the magnificence of the nobles and the vivacity of the people, formed a striking contrast to their sorrows and their finances.

The louis d'or was changed, and the demand of their surly guide satisfied, when Monsieur de Sevrac proposed uniting their small store of treasure in one stock, for the purpose of providing refreshment till some plan for their future support could be established. They drew their chairs near a small table, and after listening for a minute, and looking round to see if any one observed them, began to empty their pockets.

Madame de Sevrac produced two crowns, some small money of the country, and a miniature of her mother, set in gold. Sabina's wealth consisted of a Spanish medal, which had been a keep-fake from her gouvernante, three *paoli* and the ebony cross, which had proved an object of such awful importance. The Abbé Le Blanc, a small quantity of silver, and a gold snuff box, which had been the gift of St. Clair, during their residence at the Chateau-neuf. The Marquis who collected the little store, now added to the precious heap, the remains of his Louis d'or, and the ring which had been presented to him by the unknown lady, in the forest on the preceding night. The last article far exceeded in value the whole of the others. It was an antique head of extraordinary beauty, and richly embellished with brilliants.

Monsieur de Sevrac, whose distress of mind, had obliterated the recollection of having received such a pledge, or whose silent grief was too powerful to admit of his explaining the mat-



ter during their tedious walk, saw with delight a gem of such importance in his possession at so critical a period. He returned the Abbe his snuff-box, and Madame de Sevrac her mother's portrait, but when he took the cross of ebony from the table, he, with sudden emotion, enquired of Sabina by what means it came into her possession.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac knew not how to reply: She hesitated, trembled, and attempted to speak; but her voice faltered and she burst into a flood of tears.

"It can be of no consequence," said Madame de Sevrac. "Why do you distress her sinking heart by a tone and manner so severe? It is but a bauble, of little value, and by no means uncommon."

"I have seen this cross before!" cried the Marquis, pressing his hand upon his forehead, and starting up suddenly.

"Perhaps one like it," said Madame de Sevrac.

"No, no!" exclaimed the Marquis. "It is the very same. This word 'remember' was carved on it by me!—I shall never forget it!"

"Forget what, my Hubert?" said Madame de Sevrac, taking his hand with tender solicitude.

"Question me no farther," replied the Marquis. "Seek not to discover a secret that will wring your soul with agony."

Madame de Sevrac trembled while she gazed on her husband's features. But his voice was so stern and yet so agitated, that she had not courage to urge the question. They remained some moments in this painful situation when the

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the Marquis broke from her and rushed out of the apartment.

“Madame de Sevrac now conjured Sabina to inform her where she had found the cross, and why she was so violently agitated at the Marquis’s interrogatories. After a pause of some time during which she was almost suffocated by her tears, she replied—“I received it, I believe from Arnaud.”

Madame de Sevrac was satisfied with this answer, and questioned her no farther; naturally concluding that it had been found at the chateau of Montnoir, and presented to her daughter as a token of esteem.

Sabina, rejoiced at having so well escaped a more minute examination, retired to her chamber, trusting that Madame de Sevrac would explain every thing to the Marquis on his return to the auberge.

Monsieur de Sevrac did not join his party till late in the evening. Sabina made her excuses for not appearing at supper, as, being much indisposed, she wished to retire to rest: the apology was accepted, and Madame de Sevrac, as she hoped, quieted the Marquis’s mind respecting the cross, as far as appertained to her knowledge of it.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac, though fearful of appearing before the Marquis, lest his questions should be renewed, and attended with more minute investigation, had nevertheless no chance of enjoying much repose. The hopeless sorrows of her parents occupied her mind, while the memory of St. Clair considerably increased its inquietude. Deeply absorbed by melancholy, she traversed her chamber till past midnight.

As the weather was temperate, she then opened her window which had a small balcony overlooking a narrow walk on the banks of the Arno. The moon shone clear; the slow winding river was scarcely seen to move; the city was distinctly visible on the opposite shore, and the dappled sky shed an undulating light on every surrounding object.

Soothed by the melancholy silence of the scene, Mademoiselle de Sevrac as the clock struck one, advanced into the balcony, and leaning her folded arms on the railing, with her eyes full of tears watched the slow and silent current as it past beneath. It was then that the simple grave recurred to her memory: the solemn cypress walk, the little canopy of fragrant branches, and the benign attentions of the pious Francis.

The ideas that succeeded were of a more dreadful nature, the murdered Arnaud—the Marquis flying from his mountain solitude—the deserted Chateau-neuf and the bleeding form of the ill-fated St. Clair. She wept a torrent of tears, she gazed with pensive sadness by turns on the pale and silent moon, and the slow winding waters of Biorenza. She sighed forth the name of St. Clair, and wished that his form could at that moment appear before her.

His form did appear! She shrieked;—the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac rushed into her chamber; in a short time she recovered from her alarm, and, without hesitation told them what she had seen. They believed her terrors to be imaginary, and tried every persuasion to render her tranquil. But she persisted in the tale, and could by no means be induced to remain alone  
in

in her chamber. Her agitation was so great that Madame de Sevrac agreed to sit up with her, and a great part of the night passed in endeavouring to convince Sabina, that the phantom which she had seen, was the offspring of a disturbed imagination.

Day at length appeared ; Madame de Sevrac retired to her chamber, and Sabina to her bed, where short and broken slumbers in some degree revived her : but the impression of the object which she had beheld, was not to be effaced. A thousand times she repaired to the balcony, during the day ; but the little path beneath her window was seldom frequented, being rugged and retired.

Monsieur de Sevrac, passed the morning in writing letters. His forlorn and meagre looks, combined with the shabbiness of his wardrobe, to prevent his appearing in the streets of Florence during the day-time. The inquisitive hostess frequently troubled the Marquis with her company, and his cautious reserve did not tend either to encrease her good humour, or to gratify her curiosity : sullen, and suspicious, she watched every transaction with the most scowling discontent ; and though the demeanor of her guests was silent and unoffending, she found occasions to utter her complaints, and to embitter every hour of their mortifying seclusion.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac was more than usually agitated during the whole day ; she dreaded the approach of midnight, at the same time that she determined to watch, in her balcony, for the spectre which had so distinctly appeared to her. Time passed tardily, and her mind almost sickened under the fatigue of fear and impatience.



Every hour which brought the awful moment nearer, seemed to bring also an accumulation of terrors. Yet, so bent was every faculty of her soul on the determination it had formed, that had the danger of death threatened the event, she would not have relinquished her melancholy purpose.

The scanty repast which the contracted finances of Monsieur de Sevrac obliged him to order, rendered the avaricious hostess more dissatisfied than ever. The growling inuendoes of peevish inquietude, at last burst forth in unconstrained insolence; and her heart-broken guests were taunted with all the sneers and epithets, of the most ignominious contempt. Monsieur de Sevrac endeavoured to pacify the Fury, by assuring her that on the following day they would seek another lodging; and by ordering a supper, far beyond their means, but still unequal to the wishes of their hostess.

The awful hour approached; the party separated, and Mademoiselle de Sevrac returned to her chamber. The weather was less serene than on the preceding night, and Sabina's spirits were in no degree invigorated by the humiliations of the day. She endeavoured to persuade herself that she had been deceived, and that the person which so distinctly appeared to her, was that of some stranger; the striking similitude originating in her own brain, where the form of St. Clair was perpetually imprinted. Her resolution to watch, was prompted more by the wish to find herself deceived, than by a desire to be convinced of a truth, so terrible and extraordinary.

The auberge was perfectly quiet. Mademoiselle de Sevrac opened the window and took her place

place in the balcony, exactly as she had done on the preceding night. The Arno was somewhat ruffled by the sharp breezes which came from the hills in the environs of the city, and the sky was scattered over with dark clouds which at short intervals obscured the moon and rendered the scene particularly solemn. Sabina's resolution began to stagger. She trembled in every joint, her eyes were fixed on the narrow path—her heart palpitated—the blood seemed to freeze in her bosom; the clock struck one,—and again the form of St. Clair appeared before her.

“It was passing slowly by, when a dark cloud enveloped the moon: actuated by a sudden impulse of horror, Mademoiselle de Sevrac rushed into her chamber and hastily closed the balcony. She threw herself on her bed, and all the powers of action were subdued by terror. The moon beams which entered through her window, fell upon her pillow; she beheld the heavy clouds borne along by the rising wind, but she had not resolution to move, or to utter a syllable.

In a short time the sky was wholly dark, the atmosphere was thickened by hazy showers, and the wind moaned with a melancholy sound along the curling waves of the Arno.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac, wearied by affliction and terror, fell into a profound sleep, from which she did not awake till dawnlight: when she found her courage sufficiently renovated, to quit her bed and once more to approach her window.

The scene was very different from that which she had beheld at midnight. The lofty spires of the city were gilded with the first glances of the sun;

the body of mist, which had collected during the absence of day, was scattered by its return, and now floated in blue fragments over the adjacent hills; while the Arno again resumed its silent serenity.

The Marquis and Madame de Sevrac rose early, and by the time that Sabina had arranged her dress she was summoned to breakfast.

## CHAP. V.

"One who has well digested his knowledge both of books  
 "and men, has little enjoyment but in the company of  
 "a few select companions."

HOME'S ESSAYS.

As soon as the whole family assembled, a consultation took place, the result of which was, that they should in the evening remove to a more tranquil retirement in the environs of the city. The Marquis now found the necessity of turning his thoughts to some plan of honourable industry; for he preferred the most incessant toil, which might procure the necessaries of life, to its proudest luxuries, shared amidst the humiliations of dependence.

How to commence his occupation, or in what class of labour, was the only point on which they were at a loss to decide. Every individual of the forlorn association, had been educated splendidly, but not usefully. The fine accomplishments, the paths of elegant literature, and the fascinations of music, were familiar to them:  
 but



but it was difficult to put in practice either of these advantages, without exposing their poverty and exciting that pity, which gives an additional sting to the persecutions of fortune.

Cheerished in the luxurious lap of pleasure, and accustomed to the indolence of courts, laborious occupations were beyond their strength, at least that of Madame de Sevrac and Sabina. To commence a system of traffic, was not practicable, without either credit or property: to remain inactive, was to meet annihilation, or, what was worse, to rely on the charity of ostentatious munificence.

As soon as the dusk of evening came on, for day-light was now only productive of mortifications, by exposing the forlorn appearance of the ill-fated family, Monsieur de Sevrac and the Abbe Le Blanc quitted the auberge, to seek for a more comfortable habitation; each agreeing to return at a limited period, to report the success of their researches.

Monsieur de Sevrac found that he had a new species of difficulty to surmount. Every eye viewed him with implied suspicion; every tongue questioned him with the severity of an inquisitor. Some abruptly refused to take a stranger of his appearance under their roof. Others demanded a reference for character, or a deposit in advance for the hire of their lodgings. While no small portion of those whom he addressed, with barbarous contempt reflected on his countrymen; spoke of crimes and massacres, plunder and oppression, either by the court or the emancipated people. On every side the voice of reproof met  
his

his ear, either with the insolence of malice, or the senseless jargon of ignorance and prejudice. Those who were zealous in the cause of freedom taunted him with the long catalogue of past events ; the sufferings of a groaning multitude, and the tyranny of their rulers. Others, who preferred the chain of a despot to the expanding wings of liberty, mocked his tame submission, and counselled him to unite with that phalanx, whose efforts were combined to manacle the human race, and to steep the chain of power in the blood of the struggling million.

Monsieur de Sevrac's attention, as he strolled homeward along the banks of the Arno, was fascinated by a neat and simple fabric, on the entrance of which a board specified that apartments were to be let. Almost discouraged by his ill success, he hesitated a few moments, ascended a small flight of steps into the garden, and with a trembling hand knocked at the door, which was instantly opened by the owner of the dwelling.

There was a smile of complacency on the cheek of the *avvocato*\* Lupo, that revived the sinking heart of Monsieur de Sevrac. The purpose of his enquiries was instantly unfolded, and the simpering Signor Lupo cheerfully led the Marquis through every apartment.

"I fear," said Monsieur de Sevrac, "that your lodgings will be too expensive. I am sorry that I have troubled you to shew them, for they are above the present state of my finances."

\* A lawyer.

"Name your price, and they are your's," replied Signor Lupo, bowing with the most obsequious respect.

The Marquis had been so harshly repulsed during his evening walk that the conciliating tone and manner of the polite avvocato put him entirely off his guard, and he requested, that, without hesitation, he would fix his own terms.

"I care but little for profit," said Signor Lupo, "where I see the chance of enlightened society; and with your family, I shall be a gainer, even without a pecuniary recompence."

Monsieur de Sevrac felt a glow of confusion, rushing over his cheek, as the avvocato pronounced these words. "You cannot be a judge of those to whom you are a stranger," replied he, with some embarrassment. "We have not been many days in Florence, and are entirely unknown."

"Pardon me!" replied Signor Lupo: "I am perfectly acquainted with your whole family."

"Indeed!" cried Monsieur de Sevrac with increased amazement: "where have we had the honour to meet?"

"At the entrance of the city, on the day of your arrival," answered Lupo.

The Marquis, though considerably disconcerted, smiled at the reply. "You have a large circle of acquaintance, indeed, if you acknowledge every person you meet, as one of the number," said he.

Signor Lupo assuming an air of sagacity, answered gravely, "I read mankind at a single glance;

glance : I am a professed physiognomist. The point of a nose, the curve of a lip, and the prominence of a chin, are to me the index of the mind ; and I promise myself infinite felicity in——”

“Spare your compliment,” interrupted the Marquis, “and let us conclude our business. My family will be uneasy at my absence ; for I promised to return before this time.”

“Enchanting family !” exclaimed Signor Lupo. “I was lost in admiration, when I had the honour to meet them.”

“As far as admiration implies astonishment, no doubt you were,” answered Monsieur de Sevrac ; “for to confess the truth, they made but a sorry exhibition.”

The Marquis pressed the subject of his enquiries ; when the obliging Signor Lupo making a very trifling demand for the hire of his apartments, the business was concluded, and every thing for their reception was to be in readiness by midnight.

The Abbe Le Blanc, on his return, congratulated Monsieur de Sevrac on his success, and the ferocious hostess was desired to produce her demand, in order that it might be discharged.

It was presented with a glance of contempt, which struck deep into the heart of de Sevrac, when he discovered that the amount far exceeded the specie in their possession. The distress which was evident in his countenance, was instantaneously communicated to the whole family, except the Abbe Le Blanc, who vainly endeavoured to repel a smile of joy,



joy, which had long been a stranger to his features.

The hostess retired, muttering insults, and commending her own prudence in ridding her house of such unprofitable guests. She had scarcely quitted the room, when the Abbe emptied a purse of gold on the table, and, throwing his arm round the Marquis's neck, concealed the tear which he could suppress no longer.

"Are we discovered?" cried the Marquis earnestly.

"Oh! no:" replied the Abbe. "The spirit of St. Clair will forgive me!"

The means by which the kind and faithful friend had obtained such unexpected relief, was no longer a secret. Yet the Marquis was apprehensive, that the excuse was calculated to reconcile his mind to the acceptance of the sum, and that the Abbe had begged or borrowed it for the relief of his necessities. "My generous benefactor!" said he, "I trust and hope that my distresses have not been the source of mortification to you. If you have condescended to ask a favour, let him who derives benefit from it, bear also the humiliation. Let me know to whom I am indebted, and I will fly to thank him."

The Abbe Le Blanc smiled, and taking a papier machée snuff-box from his pocket, replied, "Let us think of it no more!" The insolent hostess was immediately satisfied, and the whole family set out for their new lodging.

Signor Lupo received them with that over-acted assiduity, which is too often the mask that

that hides the most profound hypocrisy. He was all smiles, courtesy, and alacrity. The Marquis was sickened with fulsome adulation; Madame de Sevres complimented, with extravagant praise; and Sabina extolled with rapturous enthusiasm.

It was the opinion of the fashionable Mentor, Lord Chesterfield, that "there is a certain dignity of manners absolutely necessary to make even the most valuable character either respected, or respectable." That dignity was by nature bestowed on Monsieur de Sevrac. Even in the midst of poverty, and clothed almost in the mean habiliments of a mendicant, he still displayed those graces, which are acquired by education and an intercourse with polished society. His countenance, though dark and meagre, was manly and prepossessing: his voice delivered, with harmony, the eloquent language of the scholar; and the solidity of his judgement gave a peculiar energy to the precepts he inculcated.—So eminently gifted with virtues, so marked as the favourite of nature, had Monsieur de Sevrac never basked in the sunshine of a court, he had been the pride of his contemporaries, and an example for posterity.

The laboured and obtrusive attentions of Signor Lupo were received by the Marquis with a degree of coldness almost amounting to disgust. The trivial flippancy of a coxcomb, suited not the sober stillness of a reflecting mind, perplexed with sorrows, and learning the task of philosophical submission. Signor Lupo could sing, speak many languages, play on various instruments, and talk on every subject: he was  
a vir-

a virtuoso, an admirer of the *belles lettres*, a writer of canzonettas, and a profound disciple in the mysteries of gallantry: he knew the anecdotes of every family; had equal access to the toilette of the prude and the coquette; for he arranged the secret amours of the one, and defended the unpardonable deceptions of the other.

Signor Lupo's house was neat and convenient; it answered many purposes; for though it displayed no saint, it had as many idolatries as the shrine of Loretto. Its situation was retired and pleasant: embosomed in a thick grove, which, through verdant openings presented various views of the Arno and its adjacent mountains, scattered over with the villas of Tuscan nobility, successively rising amidst groves of variegated foliage. The front commanded an open prospect of the city, the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, the Baptistry, the cupola of Santa Maria Novella, and several other admired and superb edifices: but Signor Lupo passed so much of his time in the gay societies of Florence, that he was seldom at home after mid-day, — a circumstance of infinite joy to Monsieur de Sevrac and his family.

The Abbe Le Blanc had obtained for his gold snuff-box the sum of twenty-five zechins: adversity had taught them the lesson of economy; and the spirit of independence enjoined them to adopt some plan of encreasing their little store. Signor Lupo possessed a tolerable library, to which Monsieur de Sevrac and his family had free access. Private tuition was fixed on as the most eligible pursuit, and Signor Lupo promised to recommend Madame de

de Sevrac a number of fashionable daily pupils.

The house of Signor Lupo was not far distant from the auberge of the ungenteel hostess. The window of Mademoiselle de Sevrac's chamber again commanded a view of the banks of the Arno; though adorned with more luxuriant vegetation. A small and secret bow-er, of interwoven laurustinus and myrtle, was formed at the extremity of the garden, which was sheltered from the north wind by an acclivity, planted with sweet-briar, ilex, and accacia, the path bordered with the earliest flowers of spring, while the whole of the romantic retirement tended to feed the source of melancholy rumination.

Madame de Sevrac and her daughter endeavoured to find repose in this calm and beautiful solitude; they confessed the maxim of Rochefoucault, that "On n'est jamais si malheureux qu'on se l'imagine." But the Marquis could not divest himself of that sort of pride which is the baleful weed, springing from what is called illustrious lineage, which twines about the trunk even when the full-blown honours are blasted, shedding its baleful poison round it, and frequently contaminating the fairest progeny of nature.

Monsieur de Sevrac was willing to commence a life of industry, but he still wished to preserve his name and rank from the impertinence of idle animadversion. They were both unknown to Signor Lupo; for the Marquis since his arrival at Florence, had assumed the name of a Monsieur D'Angerville, whose country



country was Flanders, and whose occupation was that of a negociant\*.

Signor Lupo had sufficient employment, during the first three days after the arrival of his new inmates, in flying from house to house, to report the extraordinary beauty of the accomplished Mademoiselle D'Angerville, who, in consequence of his eulogiums, became an object of universal curiosity: but the retirement in which she lived, and the reserve of the whole family, defeated every hope founded on the situation of the father, and cherished by the unparalleled graces of the beautiful emigrée.

Sabina, since the night that the form of St. Clair appeared to her, had gradually declined in health, and her situation was the occasion of agonizing alarm to the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac. They had marked the ravages of sorrow encreasing from the time that she discovered the grave near Castiglione; and the solemn protestations which she made, respecting the visits of St. Clair, they considered merely as the wanderings of a disordered imagination.

The assiduous Lupo employed every faculty of his prolific mind, to captivate and charm the fascinating D'Angerville; for such was the name by which Sabina was reported to all the brilliant circles of Florence. In the morning, bouquets of rare and beautiful flowers were scattered at the door of her chamber; at noon the richest fruits were presented for her delect; and the midnight hour was ushered in

\* A Merchant.

by a serenade beneath her window.—These obtrusive attentions were so artfully contrived, that they passed for mere trifles, without any meaning of gallantry or accumulation of expence. The flowers and fruits, he assured the Marquis, cost him nothing: “I have,” said he, “the unlimited command of the grounds of the Palazzo Pitti, and the Boboli gardens: the midnight serenade is my constant practice; and my mandolin, on the banks of the Arno, is, during the summer months, the object of universal attraction.”—These affections satisfied Sabina’s mind, and released it from the idea of an obligation to Signor Lupo.

The fascinating pursuits of literature hourly twined about the heart of Monsieur de Sevrac. He found that consolation in books which the world could not bestow; that soothing solace from the productions of the dead, which he had long ceased to experience from the humanity of the living. The glowing compositions of Dante, and the harmonious effusions of Metastasio, beguiled the tedious progress of melancholy hours, and weaned his mind every day more and more, from the pleasures of society.



beneath her window. That she had seen him, was certain; she was awake, with all her senses clear, at the moment when, least expected, his form moved slowly along the bank of the river. A second night she had watched, and, a second time, her eyes convinced her, that fancy had not deceived her. Though Mademoiselle de Sevrac had been superstitiously credulous in points of religion; she shrunk from that weakness of mind; which, in other instances childhood would blush to be the dupe of. The figure which she had seen, was perfectly that of St. Clair. She was convinced of the dreadful circumstance, and she remembered it with horror. Sabina's gloomy sorrows were considerably increased by the disgusting forwardness of Signor Lupo: who every day became additionally troublesome. There is nothing so gratifying to the heart, as the most trifling attentions from a beloved object; or so disgusting, as the zeal and assiduity of those whom we hold in abhorrence. The obligations, which sweeten the sorrows of life, when they proceed from the generous impulse of affection and esteem, become insupportably weighty, where they fall from the hand of the unworthy and despised. Signor Lupo was not, however, discouraged by the indifference of Mademoiselle de Sevrac, for beside the profession of an avvocato he was an adept in another species of pleading not quite so honourable. He undertook causes of every denomination, and had, by many successful suits, obtained the most distinguished patronage.

It was Mademoiselle de Sevrac's custom to rise at day break, and to refresh her weary frame with the temperate breezes of the morning.

Near



Near the house of Signor Lupo a plantation led to an eminence which commanded an extensive prospect on the road towards Pisa. The path wound in a gentle slope, bordered by sycamore and laburnum, with here and there a clump of ilex or firs; while the wanderer's feet perpetually pressed a thousand fragrant blossoms of ivy, violets, wild chervill, and briony, which formed a rich and interwoven carpet.

In one of these solitary rambles it was her ill-fortune to be followed by the avvocato Lupo; he was at all times an object of disgust, but in such a solitude he became one of terror also. Mademoiselle de Sevrac was hastening towards home, when he suddenly darted on her path, and snatching her hand, entreated her to hear him.

She so far commanded her apprehensions, as to conceal them; and with a calm and dignified countenance enquired his business.

"I have much to say," replied Signor Lupo, "and the subject of my communication interests you nearly."

"Proceed," cried Sabina gravely.

"Your beauty, Mademoiselle D'Angerville," said Signor Lupo, "is the subject of every conversation: your misfortunes the theme of universal pity. It is lamented that your situation does not entitle you to that rank in society, which your merit alone is not sufficient to command."

Mademoiselle de Sevrac smiled indignantly; and Signor Lupo continued.

"Yet, to believe that such a flower should bloom and fade in obscurity, would be to tax nature with injustice. You were born to conquer and to command. Assert your power, and let me be the happy instrument of your future prosperity."

"Are

"Are you authorized to make this honorable proposal?" said Sabina contemptuously.

"To deal candidly; I am," replied Signor Lupo.

"By whom?" continued Sabina scarcely able to smother her indignation.

"By one, who knows you well."

"Who knows me! and yet dares offer me this insult! Impossible!" cried Mademoiselle de Sevrac, endeavouring to break from him.

"This mask will not serve to conceal you any longer, said Signor Lupo. This is no time for the daughter of the exiled de Sevrac to play the hypocrite."

Sabina started.—

"Your father's safety may be purchased by your smiles; think of it, and if you hold him dear, do not hesitate to snatch him from destruction."

"I cannot comprehend your menace," replied Mademoiselle de Sevrac. "My father's security is not to be purchased by the sacrifice of his child."

"Then prepare to see him exposed and punished according to his offence," said Signor Lupo.

"His offence! Oh! Heavens!" exclaimed Sabina.

"Yes; his violation of all the moral ties that bind society."

"What has he done, to provoke such an accusation?" enquired Mademoiselle de Sevrac earnestly.

"Robbed a venerable parent of his age's comfort, his only child."

"Merciful powers!" uttered Sabina. "By

whom is my father stigmatized with such a base and infamous calumny?"

"His guilt is unquestionable," replied Signor Lupo. "He was seen carrying her away forcibly near Fontebuona: and she has not since been heard of."

Mademoiselle de Sevrac endeavoured to convince Signor Lupo, that the Marquis was unjustly accused. She told the story of their adventure in the forest, and expressed her earnest wishes for the lady's safety; but the subtle avvocato pretended to discredit her assertions, and again renewed the subject of his embassy.

"This affected ignorance," said he, "only adds to the enormity of your other impositions."

"My father's honour will not tamely bear your slander," cried Mademoiselle de Sevrac. "The world will give little credit to the assertions of an assassin," replied Signor Lupo.

"An assassin! Oh! all ye powers of sacred justice!" exclaimed Sabina, "where will your rigours end?"

"Yes, unfeeling girl," said Signor Lupo. "The horrid deed is no longer a secret; the blood which he shed in the wood near Monte Carelli now calls for exemplary punishment."

Mademoiselle de Sevrac could scarcely support herself. Signor Lupo had so far gained his point as to awaken her fears for the safety of the Marquis; and he was too artful then to relinquish his advantage. "There lives a person," said he, "who is in possession of this horrid secret; he revealed it in confidence to me; to all others, it is yet unknown; and it will depend on you to make it public, or to bury it for ever in oblivion."

Sabina

Sabina was almost distracted. Signor Lupo continued.

"I am not authorized to name the terms of secrecy. But if you have a wish to save your father—"

"Be brief," interrupted Mademoiselle de Sevrac—

"You must accompany me this night to Cortona: there you will find one who is ready to obey you." At this moment the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac advanced up the plantation. Signor Lupo greeted them with constrained cordiality, and they returned together to breakfast.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac waited impatiently for the departure of Signor Lupo. After wasting a considerable time in frivolous discourse, he took his leave; and Sabina, without hesitation, communicated all that had passed, to the Marquis and her mother.

Their consternation was unutterable! they were not sensible that the menace was perfectly harmless; or, that the person who possessed the fatal secret, could not accuse the Marquis, without criminating himself.

"The Monk, Francisco, has betrayed me!" said Monsieur de Sevrac. "Yet, having no proofs of the unfortunate transaction, I shall not plead guilty until I am accused publicly. This monster, Lupo, shall be chastised for the insult which he has offered to Sabina; and the mystery of the unfortunate captive shall be developed before I sleep."

The Marquis waited the whole day for the return of Signor Lupo, who was too cunning to hazard such a rencontre. At the approach of evening a letter arrived informing Monsieur de Sevrac,



that, if he wished to rescue his honour from an implied stigma, he would instantly repair to the *ponte vecchio*, where a friend was then waiting to receive him.

The Marquis, without alarming Madame de Sevrac or his daughter, charged his pistols, and hastened to the place of appointment. Twilight came on, and no intelligence arrived from de Sevrac : his wife, and Sabina, were overwhelmed with affliction ; often did they traverse the little garden to watch the passing boats, and to listen, with beating hearts, to the melancholy sound of distant oars advancing along the Arno. It was the Marquis's general custom to visit Florence in the dusk of evening ; and he always chose to go by water, because he thought he was less liable to be seen, or to excite curiosity. For such is the vanity of human nature, that, every individual supposes his own concerns, to be the subjects of universal observation.

Night closed ; — no news arrived from the Marquis. Madame de Sevrac was almost frantic ; Sabina, in no degree less afflicted ; and, after much consultation the Abbe Le Blanc was dispatched, to make enquiries after the object of their painful solicitude.

The Abbe hastened wildly along the streets of Florence, demanding of every one he met, whether a person of Monsieur de Sevrac's description had been seen since sun-set. After wandering till midnight, as he crossed the *ponte vecchio*, he was accosted by a stern looking stranger, who enquired whether he was not a friend of Monsieur D'Angerville. " I was going in search of you," said he, " and I will conduct you to him."

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The Abbe turned back and accompanied the messenger. They traversed several streets, and hastened along many dark passages, till they came to an old and low gate-way. They entered. "Here you will find your friend safe enough," cried the stranger. The Abbe's blood was chilled in his veins, when he found that he was within the walls of dreary and loathsome prison.

"Is my friend a prisoner?" cried the Abbe.

"What do you think he does here?" this is no place of entertainment," replied the jailor, Giacomo.

"Of what is he accused," said Le Blanc eagerly.

"Of robbery. The effects were found upon him; he resisted; and attempted to shoot the person who apprehended him," replied the jailor.

"Conduct me to his cell," said the Abbe, "he is innocent."

"Innocent or guilty, you cannot see him till noon," answered Giacomo. "Therefore make your mind easy, and endeavour to amuse yourself."

The Abbe Le Blanc then requested permission to return home, in order that he might acquaint Madame de Sevrac and Sabina of the event: but Giacomo informed him that the prison door would not be open till day-light: and again counselled him to compose his mind. There was no remedy; and therefore the Abbe threw himself on a bench in a miserable apartment, resolving to wait patiently for the hour of emancipation.

"How long this night will appear!" said the Abbe Le Blanc, "how sadly will the morning dawn on the wife and child of my ill-fated friend! Heaven grant him patience!"

"Heaven, has little to do with him," cried Giacomo. "He might have escaped if he had known how to go about it. But he is too poor, to pay his way through purgatory."

"His poverty is not criminal," said the Abbe Le Blanc.

"Faith it will make but a poor sort of a scramble with us," answered Giacomo. "For here, nothing can be done without money."

"Will honesty do nothing?" said Le Blanc.

"Not in the present case," replied the jailor; "for the poor devil has none to make the trial."

"You wrong him grievously," cried the Abbe.

"That, time will discover," answered Giacomo. "He will have a rich and powerful accuser to encounter, and 'tis a chance that he closes his career with a chain about his leg: Many a man as innocent as myself, has been condemned to work in the galleys."

"I do not doubt it," replied the Abbe. "But who is my friend to meet as his accuser?"

"Ask no questions," answered Giacomo. "I have not been bred to my trade to divulge its secrets for nothing." The Abbe understood the jailor's meaning; but he was not possessed of the means to bribe him sufficiently, and therefore made no comment.

"Come, come;" continued Giacomo. "Let us settle this matter before day-light: fifty zechins will do the business."

"I do not clearly understand you," said Le Blanc.

"No! why then you know but little of life," replied the jailor, with a ghastly smile. "A key  
of

of gold will open the strongest locks. Now do you comprehend me?"

"If he is innocent he will of course be acquitted," said the Abbe.

"Why should he take the chance, when he may have the certainty?" answered Giacomo, "Tis ten to one, but he will little thank you for your avarice. His chance is but a slender one I promise you."

"Is his fault so unpardonable?"

"That's not the point altogether;" cried Giacomo. "His accuser is powerful."

"Will power over-rule the decree of justice?"

"By San Pietro! will it," replied the jailor. "The scale is oftener turned by gold, than by the unprofitable dross called honesty. Besides, we are not over fond of aliens, who come to live by us, and not *for* us."

"What is to be done?" sighed the Abbe Le Blanc.

"Fifty zechins. That's my price," answered Giacomo, with a shrug of indifference. "Had he been noble, I would not have taken less than an hundred."

"Why should a noble pay more for liberty, than a plebeian?" said Le Blanc.

"Because they raise its value by their monopoly," answered Giacomo. "The poor have but a small share; and it would be hard indeed to set a large price on it, where they are the purchasers. Your friend seems to come under that description, and therefore he shall have his liberty for fifty. Had it been yourself, I would have taken as low as five-and-twenty."

"Why is my freedom valued at half the price of his?" said Le Blanc.



"Because I respect religion;" answered Giacomo. "And, as I am about to quit my occupation, I should like to confer my last favour on a priest."

"What can be your motive for such a wish?" enquired Le Blanc. "False is that philanthropy which makes such vile distinctions between the ranks and religions of men. All are right, who act morally well: for the source of true pre-eminence is in the soul, and not in the exterior. Why then does the ecclesiastic claim your last good office?"

"Why after committing the worst crimes, we generally fly to the church as our safest sanctuary," replied Giacomo:

"Fly to your Creator!" said the Abbe Le Blanc. "He is the true sanctuary."

"I am glad to hear it!" cried Giacomo joyfully; "for I meant to have left half what I possess, to pay for masses, for the safety of my soul."

The dawn at length appeared, and the Abbe, with Giacomo, set out for the house of Signor Lupo; for the jailor would not permit him to go alone, being a principal witness against the prisoner. They hastened along, as fast as the strength of Le Blanc would permit, and his breast throbbed with contending agonies when he approached their little habitation; for he knew not how to unfold the dreadful intelligence to Madame de Sevrac, and he dared no longer keep her in ignorance of her husband's situation. The sun just began to peep above the horizon, when they entered the garden;—the door which opened facing the Arno, was unbarred; and the Abbe, with a palpitating heart, entered the lower apartment.

The lights were still burning in their sockets;  
the

the curtains of the windows were closed, and every thing appeared awfully quiet. He called on Madame de Sevrac and Sabina; but no one answered—he searched every apartment in the house, but they were not to be found. He again flew to the saloon, and on opening the windows, by the clear morning light, to his infinite consternation beheld the floor, sprinkled with blood !

Horror seized on every faculty. He had not power to speak, or to stir from the scene of dreadful evidence; till Giacomo, informed him that he must return to the prison. After a few minutes, which the Abbe requested permission to employ in collecting his fortitude, they left the melancholy apartment, and hastened to communicate the dreadful mystery to the Marquis de Sevrac.

## C H A P. VII.

"Banishment, with all its train of evils, is so far from being the cause of contempt, that he who bears up with undaunted spirit against them, while so many are dejected by them, erects on his very misfortune a trophy to his honour."

BOLINGBROKE.

THE Abbè Le Blanc and the jailor hastened along the streets towards the prison. The populace gazed, with pity and with eager curiosity; the former excited by the venerable appearance of the Abbe, and the latter, by their knowledge of Giacomo's occupation. It was in vain that every effort was made to discover the particulars of the Marquis's unfortunate dilemma: the jailor was obstinately silent and sullen till they reached the prison.

The examination of the ill-fated de Sevrac did not take place, till noon; the evidence required to prove his crime, had not yet appeared, though, without informing him on what account, a message had been sent to request his early attendance.

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The Abbe had, therefore, waited in a state of the most painful suspense, till his arrival. He had entreated permission to see the Marquis, if only for a few moments, and in the presence of a third person; but all intercourse had been prohibited, and no remedy remained but passive and patient submission.

The hour at last came; and the Abbe was conducted, to meet his friend in the hall of public examination. The aspect of conscious innocence, which de Sevrac exhibited, instantly impressed the tribunal with the most favourable opinion, and he was treated with every mark of perfect respect.

"The only evidence that can convict you," said the *guidice di pace*, "is not yet arrived. But the forms of the court may proceed without him, as far as they tend to your apprehension. Your crime scarcely needs investigation, the property was found upon you."

The Marquis smiled, but made no answer.

"Did he resist when taken?"

"He did," replied the officers of justice. He was armed. We searched his person, and the property was found upon him."

"It is to be lamented," said the interrogator, "that a man, whose rank in society stamps his name with integrity; that one, whose honour should be his passport to unlimited confidence, should disgrace himself by so flagrant a violation of honesty. What plea can you urge in extenuation of your guilt?"

"I shall reserve my defence, till I see my accuser," replied the Marquis calmly. As he pronounced these words, the Count Monteleoni entered the Court.

"The



"The Marquis de Sevrac! Gracious God!" exclaimed he. "Can I believe my senses?"

The consternation became universal: eager solicitude appeared on every face, except that of the Marquis, whose surprize was tempered by the consciousness of innocence.

The ring which had been presented by the unknown lady, was now produced. De Sevrac seemed on a sudden rapt in wonder; all the mystery which had so strongly interested his feelings, was on the point of elucidation; and every faculty of his soul became agitated with impatience.

The Count Monteleoni, during many minutes was unable to address the Marquis. Sorrow was so blended with indignation, and resentment so blunted by pity, that the conflict was agonizing. All that had passed at Milan now recurred to his memory, all the sufferings of the beautiful Paulina wrung his heart to its innermost recesses; while the placid countenance of Monsieur de Sevrac involved his mind in a thousand conjectures, every one of which tended to perplex his imagination.

The principal evidence was now called into Court,—and to the infinite astonishment of the Marquis, Signor Lupo made his appearance!

The effrontery of practised guilt, was for a moment abashed by the manly fortitude and penetrating gaze of Monsieur de Sevrac. The instant he beheld Signor Lupo as his accuser, he felt the anticipation of his certain acquittal. The examination was re-commenced, and the midnight adventure in the forest near

Fonte-

Fontebuona, related by the Marquis, with a calm and unembarrassed voice and manner which struck conviction of his sincerity into every bosom.

Signor Lupo begged to be heard, as soon as Monsieur de Sevrac concluded his narrative. "It moves my indignation, and excites my wonder," said he, "that the human mind can be capable of such duplicity; or the understanding of the Court imposed on by such a puerile fabrication. I accuse the Marquis de Sevrac; and I will maintain the charge against him, by proofs incontestible. The ring which I have often seen on the hand of La Signora Paulina, first awakened my suspicions; and as soon as I saw it in the possession of Monsieur de Sevrac, I resolved to investigate his right to a gem of such known value and celebrity. I persevered in my resolution; and by a cautious mode of proceeding discovered that he was the man who had forced Signora Paulina from the protection of her father."

"Who dares assert so infamous a falsehood?" cried the Marquis sternly.

"Your own daughter, Mademoiselle de Sevrac," replied the avvocato Lupo.

"I demand that my daughter may be sent for," cried the Marquis. The Abbe Le Blanc's heart ached to the centre; he knew that Mademoiselle de Sevrac was not to be found, and his fears, lest her absence should confirm Signor Lupo's assertion, prevented his discovering the dreadful event. A messenger was dispatched to fetch Sabina. But in a short time he returned with intelligence that, during

ring the preceding night, she, with Madame de Sevrac, had absconded.

The horror which thrilled through the bosom of the Marquis, was contrasted by the insulting smile of Signor Lupo.

“Yes,” cried he, with malicious triumph, “Mademoiselle de Sevrac is by this time many posts from Florence. She departed last night; she had not courage to enter a Court where her evidence would certainly convict a disgraced and guilty father.”

The Count Monteleoni, though he had twice met the Marquis at Monsieur Ravillon’s, had never seen Madame de Sevrac or Sabina. He did not entertain the slightest idea that the beautiful D’Angerville, – was the daughter of the Marquis, or he could have developed the tale which Signor Lupo repeated. The perverse fortune which had followed Monsieur de Sevrac since the hour that he escaped from Paris, was never more triumphant than in the present moment of embarrassment.

The Count Monteleoni, whose rank and popularity rendered him all-powerful, requested that he might be allowed to close the evidence. “Of the supposed robbery,” said he, “I believe the Marquis de Sevrac to be innocent. The ring might have been the gift of my unfortunate child; but the outrage committed against my domestic peace, still remains a matter of profound mystery. However, that part of Signor Lupo’s accusation may terminate upon a more minute investigation, I shall not appeal to a tribunal of justice, for that, which the laws of honour will afford me. You may release the prisoner, and we will arrange this business privately.

vately. The Court broke up, and the avvocato Lupo retired overwhelmed with chagrin and disappointment.

Monteleoni and de Sevrac adjourned to a neighbouring tavern, where they were ushered into a private apartment, and the Count with evident perturbation, addressed his companion.

"Monsieur de Sevrac," said he, "After what passed at Milan, of all men living, you are the last whose honour I should have suspected. You, who know the tender bonds of parental affection, should have been the most reluctant, where a violation of faith was rendered doubly flagitious, by the seduction of unguarded innocence. The wretchedness to which you had reduced my child—"

The Marquis started; his sudden emotion for a minute interrupted the Count Monteleoni, and again he proceeded.

"The subject wrings my heart!" said the afflicted father. "Yet as the time is come when we must settle our account of sorrow, I will not shrink from my purpose, - but bring it to a speedy conclusion.

The Marquis bowed, and waited with impatience for an explanation.

"Signora Paulina's fatal passion for you——"

"For me!" cried de Sevrac, with amazement.

"Hear me; and then make your defence," said Monteleoni; endeavouring at the same time to suppress his agitation.

"Alas!" the recollection of past events, almost unmans me," continued the Count. "Yet let the pangs of a parent's heart, almost broken by affliction, plead an excuse for these interruptions,



tions, and induce you to restore the treasure of which you have deprived me."

Monsieur de Sevrac attempted to speak, but Monteleoni checked him.

"The anguish of Paulina's sufferings, would, had you been generous or noble, have shielded her from insult: the weakness of a woman's heart, should claim the protection of an honourable mind. I had no idea that a parent's bosom could be wounded, by the inhumanity of one, who bore that tender title."

"Be brief! Or I shall grow frantic," cried de Sevrac wildly.

"The wretched state, to which Signora Paulina has been long reduced, on your account—"

"On my account!" repeated the Marquis interrupting him.

"If madness may be termed wretchedness," continued Monteleoni.

"Heavenly powers!" exclaimed de Sevrac, almost petrified with horror.

"Well may you shrink!" cried the Count. "Well may the blood forsake that cheek, and that heart shudder with conscious pangs, which could add to the privation of reason, the infamy of dishonour. But, mark me, de Sevrac!" continued Monteleoni—"though the first calamity is beyond the reach of mortal aid; the last shall find just vengeance in my sword."—He could not proceed.

The Marquis was overpowered by sensations little less acute than those of the Count Monteleoni. A thousand tortures wound about his heart: pity, regret, astonishment and horror, at once assailed it. The memory of Paulina's gentleness and beauty; the idea that she had been exposed

exposed to the brutal violence of ruffians ; and the pangs which evidently tore the heart of her afflicted father, conspired to awaken a new source of unutterable anguish.

" I never professed to love the unfortunate Paulina," said he. " Her loss of reason cannot be attributed to me. Why then accuse me of that, which will only add to my misfortunes, without diminishing your sorrows ?"

" When you were condemned to die," answered the Count Monteleoni, " she heard of the event ; and from that moment resigned herself to despair. She never could be taught to think that you were still living ; the first impression was indelible ; and all the persuasion of eloquence had not power to remove it. Day after day she pined in despondency ; while the sickly hue that overspread her beauty, menaced a speedy relief from the agony she suffered. Her declining health amended, as her mental faculties decayed : at times she would converse reasonably and with a degree of placidity which afforded a faint ray of hope : but the recollection of your peril, never failed to counteract the intellectual struggle, and the articulation of your name, was the signal of her returning insanity."

" Who told her of my danger ?" said the Marquis with an agitated voice.

" Monsieur Ravillon," replied the Count Monteleoni.

" Oh ! horrible ! inhuman monster !" exclaimed de Sevrac. " Did he know that I was condemned to die ?"

" He did."

" Fiend, unparalleled !" continued the Marquis.

Monteleoni

Monteleoni proceeded—

“ He frequently corresponded with his son Arnaud ; and every transaction which took place at Milan, was regularly communicated.

“ Now,” said Monsieur de Sevrac, “ let me repeat the solemn oath of a man, who, though persecuted by fortune is still above dishonour. And, believe me, while I swear by all the powers of sacred truth ; by that Being who knows the secrets of all hearts ! I never entertained a thought that could, in the smallest degree, contaminate the honour of your daughter. I am a father : the throbbings of a parent’s breast, if you could behold them, would acquit me. Could I, who have been the most persecuted of misfortune’s children, forget the anguish of a breaking heart, and plant a poniard in the bosom of another ? You little know, that all my future days are devoted to misery ; to pangs, forever kept alive by the recollection of one rash minute.—” He paused for a few moments, and then continued—

“ If you can believe, that I, a husband, a father, an alien, and a bankrupt of every hope, of every consolation, am the seducer of your child ; do not hesitate to take that life, which is only to be valued while it is untarnished by dishonour.”

The majesty of truth beamed in de Sevrac’s eyes ! his countenance was the index of a soul, brave and exalted ! Monteleoni fell on his neck, and demanded his forgiveness.

“ Take thy ring, injured de Sevrac,” said he, “ and keep it as a pledge of my unbounded confidence. In your friendship let me find consolation ; and in your generous bosom that sympathy,

thy, which will unite with mine in mourning for my lost child !”

“ She is not lost ! She shall not be lost !” exclaimed the Marquis. “ We will find her, or we will perish !”

The Count Monteleoni and de Sevrac now separated. The former pleaded business of importance ; and the latter anticipated the new scene of anguish which he was destined to encounter. The Marquis had carefully avoided mentioning his situation in Florence, and particularly the circumstance of his having assumed the name of D'Angerville : his shabby appearance prevented Monteleoni's making any enquiry, till an opportunity should present itself when he might with delicacy offer his services, and they parted with the Marquis's promise to visit Monteleoni on the following morning.

The Abbe Le Blanc waited in the street, till the momentous interview was concluded ; and, at the door, with a beating heart, presented himself before his persecuted friend. They hastened to the house of Signor Lupo, which they found still empty, and the blood, which stained the floor of the apartment, where the Abbe had left Madame de Sevrac and Sabina, evidently declared, that some deed of horror had been perpetrated.

They were perplexed and distracted with a variety of conjectures, when one, as terrible as it was probable darted across the Marquis's mind.

“ Le Blanc,” said he, “ you know that at the death of the villain Ravillon, my father's fortune devolves on Mademoiselle de Sevrac. But that, in case she dies before him, it will  
again



again revert to him or to his heirs. Is it not possible that the spirit of a fiend may instigate Ravillon to an act at which nature shudders?"

"I dare not comprehend you," said the Abbe, turning pale at the idea that rushed into his mind.

"The assassination of my child!" cried the Marquis, with convulsive horror.

The Abbe was silent, and de Sevrac's grief overleaped all the bounds of reason and philosophy. Again they set out, each taking a different route; and a great part of the evening was wasted in fruitless researches; before sunset, they hastened once more to Signor Lupo's, in order to wait for his return home, and not without hopes, that they should compel him, to own himself an accomplice in the dreadful transaction.

## C H A P. VIII.

"Il vaut mieux employer notre esprit à supporter les in-  
 "fortunes qui nous arrivent, qu'à prévoir celles qui peu-  
 "vent nous arriver."

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

THE distraction which Monsieur de Sevrac experienced when he was informed that his wife and daughter were no where to be found, made him relinquish the pursuit of Signora Paulina, and bend his thoughts towards those dear objects, whom he was bound in nature to protect. He explored every apartment in their little dwelling; examined every path of Sabina's favourite retreats, the arbour, the shrubbery, and the acclivity, which she so often ascended to contemplate the surrounding scenery. Every beauty that decorated the landscape, every dome that rose above the city of Florence, seemed, in silent grandeur, to mock his grief, and to contrast his wretchedness.

The conduct of Signor Lupo left no doubt in Monsieur de Sevrac's mind, but that he had some knowledge of Sabina's departure: the idea  
 filled

filled his soul with horror ! Her virtues, beauty, and uncomplaining submission to the change of fortune, which her youth had been taught to experience, rendered her absence the more terrible, and served to redouble every pang of parental inquietude. But this was not the only source of anguish allotted to the unhappy de Sevrac. He had lost, with his darling child, the faithful partner of his misfortunes ; the wife whom he had loved with enthusiastic fondness ; the friend, the companion of his exile ; the monitress, whose word was consolation, and whose smile had so often diffused a calm delight over the darkest scenes of domestic sorrow.

Monsieur de Sevrac was so bewildered with contending conflicts, that, for a time, all the avenues of reason seemed overwhelmed ; and one vast ruin menaced the termination of his anguish. The Abbe Le Blanc in vain endeavoured to inculcate the lessons of hope and fortitude : the last event in the catalogue of miseries, appeared to sum up the terrible account which left the Marquis a bankrupt of every prospect, except those that led him to despair.

The loss of fortune might have been supplied by industry, while health and resolution aided the task of necessity ; but he had now no motive left to sustain his toil ; no solace remaining that could meliorate the bitterness of reflection, or bid him look with joy to milder days. He had no gentle friend to assist him in his labours, or to reward them with a smile when they were completed. Alone in the vast universe, and driven from the sphere where he had shone, like a brilliant constellation, every path was gloomy, and every thought distracting.

The

The Abbé conjured him to rouse his mind, and to recollect that some exertions were necessary at a moment of such infinite importance. "Every hour that we delay," said he, "perhaps increases the danger of Mademoiselle de Sevrac."

The Marquis turned fiercely towards him. "What danger?" said he. "Is not my daughter's fame invulnerable? Have I not taught her to value life only in proportion as she retained her honour?"

"Perhaps she is not allowed the power to chuse," replied the Abbé. "She may be the victim of some villain's artifice."

"Ha!" exclaimed de Sevrac, "you awaken a new scorpion in my bosom. That pander Lupo—"

"Alas! I almost fear!"—interrupted the Abbé—

"It must be so!" replied Monsieur de Sevrac. "What is to be done? If he has triumphed over the honour of my child, he shall not live, Le Blanc! By Heaven he shall not!"

"Will the shedding of a villain's blood restore the fame of the injured object?" cried the Abbé. "Will an accumulation of horrors tend either to your present advantage, or your future peace of mind? Believe me, there is more virtue in preventing one crime, than in punishing a million."

"How shall we proceed? Tell me, and I will take your counsel," said the Marquis, endeavouring to smother his indignation.

"Let us hasten to the police," replied the Abbé: "the laws are open to every alien; and that nation would be stigmatized which could sanction such an outrage."

"Yet,"



"Yet," answered the Marquis sighing, "we must pay for justice! No one will plead without reward. The very scale of humanity sometimes preponderates by that pernicious dross, which contaminates our natures, and makes the fairest scenes of life the marts of miserable traffic."

"Think better of the world," said the Abbé Le Blanc.

"Shew me the speck in the universe, where rugged honesty dares assert its rights, where man is only valued for his virtues, and I will change my opinion," cried de Sevrac.

"Do not torture your mind with ruminations on the miseries of life," said the Abbé; "but let all its energy be exerted to accomplish the recovery of those treasures, which can enable you to bear them." The Marquis roused himself from the delirium that assailed him, and they immediately proceeded to the office of the police.

The first demand was a deposit of fifty zechins, to defray the expence of dispatching messengers to all the boundaries of the Tuscan dominions. The chagrin which Monsieur de Sevrac felt was not to be suppressed; and his mortification was infinite, when he was told, that no step could possibly be taken till the sum required was lodged in the hands of the police.

The Marquis and the Abbé Le Blanc returned home, more disconsolate than ever. Too proud to beg, and too much reduced in appearance to hope for credit, (for, in the groveling opinions of one half the human race, the outside form passes for the prototype of innate qualities) too recently escaped from a charge, of which the illiberal mind was slow in acquitting him, to expect

expect much confidence or friendship from strangers, his situation seemed destitute of every resource; when the gem, presented to him by the Count Monteleoni, afforded a gleam of hope, and he resolved, before reflection checked the impulse, to offer it for sale.

For this purpose, with an agonized heart, Monsieur de Sevrac set out from the house of Signor Lupo: he passed many shops, where he might have offered the ring, but whenever he approached their thresholds, his resolution failed. It was a gift bestowed as a pledge of sacred confidence; it had been the property of the beautiful and ill-fated Paulina: he had not courage to reveal his poverty, and what other excuse could he assign for disposing of the jewel? Shrinking at the idea that the world would attribute such a step to avarice, or want of gratitude, he once thought of opening his mind to the Count Monteleoni; but reason whispered—"To what purpose?" and again the ring appeared as the only means to satisfy his necessities without exposing his pride to the humiliation which it dreaded.

Monsieur de Sevrac, in all his misfortunes, had not yet experienced the pang which that man must feel who bends his spirit to the task of supplication: he had never ventured to encounter the icy ostentation of vulgar souls; the sneers of vaunted pity; the frowns of fastidious prudence; the proffered lessons of advice; or worst of all, the stern denial of unfeeling avarice. Whatever his resolution had been, on various trials, when the tortures

of dependence were menaced, his heart was sensitive beyond the powers of resistance.

The time was come, when de Sevrac had but one alternative; to sell the ring or to beg. He anticipated all the pain which he should experience if ever the knowledge of the former step should reach the ear of the Count Monteleoni; but the insult which he dreaded still more, was attached to the idea of a refusal. He was perplexed, but not subdued; he shrunk for a moment, he bowed beneath the mighty combination; but his mind still resisted sufficiently to prevent its crushing him; while, armed with the potent shield of fortitude, he repelled the attacks of despair, and still met his adverse fate with unconquered philosophy.

The event, during all its vicissitudes, which had gone the nearest to destroy him, was the blow which he believed had been given him by St. Clair. Educated with the most rigid principles of honour, such an insult appeared a thousand times more terrible than death. The gnawing incertitude which attended the degradation, the strong prejudices which he had to encounter, and the gratitude which still lingered round his heart, for benefits received, assailed his reason, and the faculties of resistance almost perished in the conflict; de Sevrac had received a blow! his honour was sullied by his forbearance! It was there that he was vulnerable; and the barrier which prejudice seemed to place between him and his revenge, strongly irritated the sense of injury, while it wholly deadened that of pity or forgiveness.

The

The persecutions of poverty, the privation of social happiness, made another kind of impression on his feelings. His domestic grief was of a more tender nature: it softened, but it did not irritate; it melted, but it did not goad his heart: his misfortunes were such as all men living, more or less, are doomed to suffer; they afflicted, but they did not disgrace him. He was no less respectable in the opinions of honourable minds; for adversity did not stamp impeachment on his life, or hand down his name with infamy to posterity.

While Monsieur de Sevrac was traversing the street, at the door of a small and gloomy house stood a lapidary. The name and trade which his dim windows exhibited, induced the Marquis to stop. He looked earnestly at the artisan, and he fancied that honesty and mildness were delineated in his countenance. He advanced a few steps—stopped—advanced again—spurred on by necessity, arrested by pride—till a courteous bow from the lapidary decided the contest, and he entered.

It was near the dusk of evening, when the master of the shop, with ready zeal, requested to know Monsieur de Sevrac's commands. The lapidary had frequently bought jewels from unfortunate emigrées, for less than half their value; and the forlorn appearance of the Marquis made him anticipate a profitable bargain.

"I have a gem which I wish to dispose of," said Monsieur de Sevrac, taking the ring from his pocket, and presenting it for inspection.



The man, as soon as he received it, smiled; lights were called for, and the confusion which overspread de Sevrac's face was no longer concealed by the gloom of evening.

"I know this ring," said the artisan.—The Marquis shrunk, almost to shuddering.

"This gem requires no farther examination," continued the lapidary. "I set it and I know its value."

"Indeed!" said Monsieur de Sevrac, with a voice scarcely audible.

"Look at it: is it not the same?" cried the artisan, addressing himself to a young man who was busily employed at his trade, and who sat with his back towards the Marquis.

"It is," replied the workman, as he returned it to his master, still keeping his face averted, as if to shun the eyes of Monsieur de Sevrac.

"It belonged to the daughter of a Tuscan nobleman," said the lapidary. "I conclude that you have her leave to dispose of it."

"I had it from her father," answered the Marquis.

"The Count Monteleoni?"

"The same," replied de Sevrac.

"Have I your permission to ask the Count whether he knows of your wishing to part with it?"

The Marquis was startled by this question: it menaced the very humiliation which he had so decidedly shrunk from. His confusion, which was evident, strengthened the lapidary's suspicions, and, returning the ring hastily, "I cannot be the purchaser," said he, "unless

"unless I have your permission to investigate the matter."

The insinuation conveyed the idea of a new and more terrible mortification than even the exposure of his poverty. "If you suspect my honesty," said Monsieur de Sevrac, "you may make every inquiry you think proper." As he spoke, the young artisan rose abruptly from his seat, and darted out of the shop. There was something strangely confused in his manner, and the pains which he took to conceal his face excited the Marquis's curiosity.

"I cannot see the Count Monteleoni to-night," said the lapidary, still fixing his eyes on the countenance of de Sevrac; but if you will return to-morrow, before noon, I will take such steps as shall accelerate the business."

"It is not necessary to be so sceptical," replied the Marquis: "I am pressed to raise a sum this night, the want of which compels me to be urgent. Take my word and give me half its value."

"Not to-night," said the artisan.

"To-night, I conjure you," cried the Marquis, earnestly; "for to-morrow, at the break of day, I shall leave Florence."

"Press me no farther, signor," answered the lapidary; "there are reasons why I dare not trust you."

"Name them?"

"My own safety, and your evident embarrassment."

"My embarrassment," answered Monsieur

de Sevrac, "proceeds from the novelty of my situation. This ring—" He hesitated.

"'Tis a rich gem!" said the lapidary, viewing it with admiration.

"I valued it beyond its intrinsic worth," replied the Marquis.

"Then why do you part with it? Have you nothing else to dispose of?"

"Nothing!" answered de Sevrac, pressing his hand to his forehead, and turning towards the door.

"Will you give me your name and address?"

The Marquis made no reply. He was not willing to give his real name, and he was too honest to deceive the artificer by a feigned one. Had he for a moment divested himself of that false feeling which the pride of birth had implanted in his heart; had he but forgotten his adventitious claims, and only valued himself upon the endowments of nature; the artisan had ceased to question his veracity, and his necessities would instantly have found the relief which they demanded.

The Marquis stood for some minutes meditating how he should proceed: the lapidary returned the ring; and, with a deep sigh de Sevrac advanced towards the threshold. Again he stopped—he looked back at the master of the shop; his features did not exhibit the graces of pity: the door was opened, and the Marquis rushed into the street, to conceal his agitation.

It was night, and no steps had been taken respecting Madame de Sevrac. The Marquis could not divert his mind of the faint hope

hope that her absence, and that of Sabina, proceeded from some misunderstanding respecting his morning's adventure. He was impatient to see the Abbe Le Blanc, and yet he almost dreaded to meet him; in the mingling emotions of his soul, something desperate seemed to gain an ascendancy; when, traversing the streets with hasty steps, and scarcely conscious whither he was going, on a sudden he found himself near the door of the Count Monteleoni. After a moment's reflection, he determined to combat the proud feelings of his mind, to reveal the distress which he laboured under, and to rely on the humanity of a friend for succour and forgiveness.

He ascended the steps of the portico, and was raising his hand towards the door, when he heard a voice articulate, "Hold! do not knock; but hear what I have to communicate."

Monsieur de Sevrac turned instantly towards the sound, and a young man, with a respectful bow, approached him.

"Generous de Sevrac! no less noble than unfortunate!" said the stranger: "the hour is come when gratitude must be exemplified, and humanity repaid."

"I do not comprehend you," replied the Marquis.

"How should you?" continued the stranger. "When last I saw you—"

Here he paused, and evidently struggled with his feelings. Monsieur de Sevrac was astonished at so unexpected an address, and waited earnestly to hear its conclusion.



"Explain yourself; for my time is precious," said the Marquis, hastily.

"I cannot," replied the young man: "but this small packet will unravel all the mystery; take it, for I must be gone."

De Sevrac put forth his hand, the stranger pressed it earnestly: "Forgive me! only forgive me!" said he instantly departing, and leaving the packet with the Marquis, who, in a few moments, lost sight of him.

The consternation which this strange interview excited, was infinite. The night was dark, and Monsieur de Sevrac did not think it safe to open the parcel in the street, lest any one that might pass should observe him. He immediately concluded, that it contained a part of the property that he had lost near Fontebuona, and, with eager haste, proceeded towards his deserted habitation.

As he was crossing the ponte nuovo, he met the Abbe Le Blanc: the Marquis impatiently inquired whether success had attended his researches. "Alas!" answered the faithful Abbe, "the absence of Madame de Sevrac is no secret. Her sudden departure is the theme of every conversation; and the malicious world does not scruple to report it an elopement of gallantry!" De Sevrac started.

"Perdition seize the inventor of such calumny!" exclaimed de Sevrac. "Yet tell me, tell me all: who informed you that such a lie was credited?"

"I heard it came from Signor Lupo," replied the Abbe.

"Has he been the reporter of the tale?" cried the Marquis, scarcely able to suppress his rage. "Let us fly to find him."

"He

"He has quitted Florence; and, not more than two hours since, set out for Pisa."

"How had you the information—what did he report—where are they gone—who saw them?" cried de Sévrac, without allowing himself time to breathe.

"They were seen in a splendid carriage, attended by a numerous retinue," replied the Abbe.

"Which route have they taken?" demanded the Marquis, eagerly.

"The road towards Cortona."

"Thank God! they live!" exclaimed de Sévrac; "as for the tale of slander, I have no faith in it: I know that they are innocent! Now let us hasten to our lodging, for I have another mystery to develope."

"We can return thither no more," replied the Abbe Le Blanc. "Signor Lupo has barricaded the doors; and, by this time, is many miles from Florence. Let us, for the present, devise means to obtain a lodging for the night; and early in the morning we will arrange our plans decisively."

They proceeded to the nearest house of public resort; where, being ushered into a decent apartment, the Marquis prepared to examine the packet.

## C H A P. IX.

"What is grandeur? what is power?  
 "Heavier toil, superior pain.  
 "What the bright reward we gain?  
 "The grateful mem'ry of the good.  
 "Sweet is the breath of vernal show'r,  
 "The bee's collected treasures sweet,  
 "Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet  
 "The still small voice of gratitude!"

GRAY.

THE Marquis, with a trembling hand, broke the seals on the outside of the parcel; and every cover that enveloped it, augmented his impatience. Hope and curiosity combined to agitate his bosom, while he tore and scattered the papers without uttering a syllable, till, to his infinite astonishment, he discovered the treasure which they contained.

Monsieur de Sevrac's joy almost amounted to agony. He looked earnestly at the Abbe Le Blanc, but the natural generosity of his heart prevented his revealing the origin of the mystery.

"From whom could this timely succour proceed?" said the Abbe, with evident surprise and satisfaction.

"From a person unknown;" replied the Marquis. "A youth, with whose name I am unac-

unacquainted, presented the packet to me in the street." —

"Had you never seen him before?" said the Abbe.

Monsieur de Sevrac, after a pause of some moments, answered, "I believe that I know him. — "Yet," continued he, recollecting himself, "it cannot be the same! for I left him dying."

"Comes it from St. Clair, or Arnaud?" cried Le Blanc eagerly —

"From neither one nor the other," replied the Marquis, still fixing his eyes on the treasure, and rapt in wonder; for it was the very purse, with the twenty louis d'ors which he had left at Bologna, in the chamber of Marianna!

"My faithful friend!" said Monsieur de Sevrac, taking the Abbe by the hand, "Heaven has not wholly deserted us! This sum, small as it is, appears like a world of wealth at this moment of necessity. Where it came from, we shall perhaps know, at some future period. It has rescued my mind from a new trial of humiliation; it will enable us to detect the calumny of the miscreant Lupo; and may, perhaps, restore to my aching heart, those beloved treasures." — His feelings overpowered his voice, and he leant on the Abbe's shoulder, endeavouring to suppress them: while Le Blanc turned his head aside, to conceal the tear which friendship claimed, but which philosophy blushed to exhibit.

"Now let us seek my wife and daughter," cried the Marquis, while hope beamed through his eyes, and gratitude glowed within his bosom. After taking such refreshment as was absolutely



solutely requisite to support nature, which began to faint, for de Sevrac had not tasted food since he parted from his family, they, after depositing half their treasure for the expences of the police, procured a small open carriage, and, before day break, departed from Florence.

They travelled with unremitting speed and diligent inquiry, till they came to the fertile plains, leading to the mountain which exhibits the time worn edifices of Cortona. The scenery would, to minds at ease, have afforded the most sublime source of contemplative pleasure! Rich and variegated plantations of vines and olives; distant forests of oak and cork trees; beautiful vallies; the vast lake of Perugia; with a grand perspective of apennine above apennine, piercing the blue expanse, and seeming to blend with the horizon as far as the confines of Siena; while the wavy irregularity of the stupendous eminences enclosed a tract of scenery scarcely to be equalled, and not to be delineated.

The sun rose on one of those mornings of spring, which harmonize and re-animate all the beauties of nature! The breezes were soft and refreshing; the verdure glowing and luxuriant; and the sky, brightly blue and uniformly unclouded. Yet, a less vivid and splendid scene would have been more congenial to Monsieur de Sevrac's mind, which was absorbed in contemplating one dark perspective of cheerless affliction.

As they proceeded on their journey they enquired at every hut, and of every passenger, but could obtain no satisfactory information. Some pretended that they knew every thing, and others confessed that they knew nothing; some smiled, others gaped and stared; but they were

all

all equally barren of information on the subject which agonized de Sevrac's bosom. Concluding that Signor Lupo had deceived them, he proposed to the Abbe that they should, without delay, return to Florence. "We will make our enquiries at Cortona:" said the Abbe Le Blanc, "and if we are not successful, I think your plan will be the wisest we can adopt." As they ascended the mountain which was to terminate their pursuit, Monsieur de Sevrac observed the roof of a spacious pile of architecture, rising majestically above a dark and venerable wood: their mules toiling slowly up the rugged ascent, they demanded of their postillions to whom it belonged.

"To a French nobleman," replied he, "one that revels in treasure, which some folks pretend to say, was not honestly obtained."

"How long has he lived here?" inquired the Abbe Le Blanc.

"Long enough to buy a good name," answered the guide, "two years and upwards."

"Are good names so easily bought?" said the Marquis.

"Ah! Signor! where did you get your knowledge?" replied the postillion, "every fool knows that money can work miracles. Let a man but carry his hands full of gold, and nobody will look into his heart, I promise you."

"Does merit depend on outward appearances only?" said de Sevrac. "Is the exterior of a man to stamp his innate character?"

"For your sake I hope, not always," replied the blunt observer.

The

The Marquis, in any state of mind less agitated, would have smiled at the rugged comment of their guide. "But what is this stranger's name?" said he.

"The Count de Briancour," answered the postillion.—

"Merciful God!" exclaimed the Marquis, "whither will my fate lead me?"

The Abbe Le Blanc looked earnestly at Monsieur de Sevrac; the energy of whose words, added to the most evident confusion of manner, appeared to convey a meaning that was not meant to be expressed. The name of de Briancour had awakened those sensations, had touched that nerve, which had long throbbed with agony in the breast of de Sevrac. Pangs not to be concealed, recollections not to be repelled, rushed through his brain;—he grasped the Abbe's hand;—"Let us instantly return to Florence;" said he, with a voice quick and inarticulate.

"You astonish me," cried the Abbe Le Blanc; "what is there in the name of de Briancour that can so strongly agitate your feelings? Was he not your friend, whose fortune you assisted in augmenting, and whose confidence you boasted?"

"Yes! There originates the mischief," replied de Sevrac.—"I would not meet Monsieur de Briancour at this moment of irritation, for all the treasures of the universe. My soul shudders at the idea, every faculty of my mind shrinks with repugnance, from the very remembrance that he lives."—"And yet," said the Abbe Le Blanc, "not three years since he was your constant associate; when the pleasures of society

society were heightened by the display of every luxury ; when splendour dazzled and power commanded, who was so proudly distinguished, as the friend of your heart ?”

The Marquis’s emotion increased with every word that the Abbe uttered—and after several efforts to speak, he exclaimed, “ He was the inhuman associate, who had not the honesty to save me from a deed”—

“ What deed ?” cried the venerable Abbe, trembling to be told the truth, at the same moment that he wished to know it ; the Marquis continued.—

“ My friend, do you respect me ? Am I, in your opinion, either generous or humane ?”

“ I have ever thought you both,” replied the Abbe, “ nor will your frantic conduct teach me to alter my sentiments.”

Monsieur de Sevrac drew from his bosom the crucifix of ebony which was fastened by a ribbon round his neck. Every feature was convulsed, the cold drops glistened from every pore on his pale forehead. He grasped the Abbe’s hand. Le Blanc,” said he, “ I am damned beyond the hope of pardon !—This cross” —

“ This is frenzy !” interrupted the Abbe, “ that cross was given by Arnaud to your daughter ; given most likely as a boyish pledge of faith, and nothing more.”

“ Oh ! It was indeed a pledge of faith !” exclaimed de Sevrac, pressing it to his heart, while the starting tears gushed from his eyes that were raised towards heaven.

At this interesting moment the postillion informed them that they were arrived at Cortona ; for they were too deeply engaged in conversation



tion to discover that their journey was at an end. The Marquis darted hastily out of the carriage, and entered the auberge.

Again every question was asked that could possibly lead to the purpose of his errand; but nothing satisfactory threw the faintest light on the sudden departure of Madame de Sevrac and Sabina; and in the evening, the weary travellers again set out, on their return to Florence.

As they passed the splendid habitation of Monsieur de Briancour, the Abbe Le Blanc watched the rising emotion of de Sevrac's mind. The conscious agonies which he evidently suffered, baffled all the pains he took to hide them. He breathed convulsively; his hands were clasped together; his whole frame seemed to feel a shock, which neither fortitude nor nature could resist.

"Compose your mind," said the Abbe Le Blanc, "this new source for self-persecution is as unaccountable as it is sudden." The Marquis endeavoured to smile, but the rigid muscles of his countenance resisted the effort, and a glance of horror silenced his terrified companion. They continued their journey, and few words were uttered till they reached Florence. As they entered the city their carriage was stopped, and a letter was delivered to the Marquis:—He tore it hastily open;—it contained these words:

"Lose not a moment, your route being known, this message is dispatched to overtake you. Repair instantly to the house of the Count Monteleoni, where you will find the treasures which have been basely wrested from you. If there be yet one atom of *yourself* remaining;

maining ; if adversity has not subdued all that is noble in the human heart, you will crush your enemy and avenge your wrongs. If not, remain the wretch you are ; despised, unpitied, and dishonoured."

Before Monsieur de Sevrac had finished reading the letter, the messenger who had delivered it was out of sight ;——the square where the Count Monteleoni lived was not far distant, and the Marquis desiring the Abbe to pay the postillion, snatched his pistol, leaped from the carriage, and hastened to obey the injunctions of the unknown writer.

Resentment, indignation, and surprize, aided the combination of reflections which filled de Sevrac's mind, and by the time that he reached the portico, he was little less than frantic.——

As soon as the gate was opened he rushed into the house, and without making any inquiry, proceeded towards the saloon ; where, throwing open the door, he beheld Madame de Sevrac, Sabina, and the Count Monteleoni.

In the first transport of rage and jealousy, he aimed his pistol at the man whom he considered as the most atrocious of villains. But the violence of passion enfeebled his arm, and Monteleoni, before the Marquis had power to annihilate him, wrested the pistol from his hand ; while Madame de Sevrac clasping his knees, exclaimed, " Oh ! Hubert ! will you murder the man who has rescued your child from infamy ! "

Monsieur de Sevrac's strength was exhausted by mental conflicts ; he threw himself on the floor incapable of making a reply ; Sabina, taking the Count Monteleoni's hand, conjured him to forgive her father's rashness, and to wait patiently

tiently for that explanation which would follow the return of reason. After a few moments, the Marquis seemed less irritated; Madame de Sevrac assisted him to rise; and with eagerness began to unfold the mystery, which had nearly ended so fatally to all parties.

The Count Monteleoni withdrew; he did not wish for a triumph over the impetuous and rash de Sevrac; he could not bear to receive his apology, or his thanks. Sabina entreated him to stay, but he resisted her importunities, and Madame de Sevrac immediately related all that had happened since the day of separation.

"On the morning of that day, on which you were arrested, and conveyed to prison, the Count Monteleoni received a visit from a friend; it was a visit of exultation; if the human heart can exult, in the destruction of innocence,"—here Madame de Sevrac paused a few minutes to suppress her tears, and then proceeded.—

"This friend of the Count Monteleoni's, informed him that the beautiful D'Angerville, for such was the name by which Sabina was the theme of universal panegyric, would in a very few hours be left wholly unprotected, and probably the easy victim of her irremediable misfortunes. So rich a prize was not to be rejected; and the vile, the base betrayer of your darling child was to receive a thousand zechins, for the accomplishment of her dishonour!"

"Go on!" cried the Marquis, while his limbs trembled with horror and resentment.—Madame de Sevrac continued.

"The Count Monteleoni heard the tale of infamy with abhorrence; and though Mademoiselle D'Angerville was wholly unknown to him; though

though he had sorrows of his own,—a daughter lost,—deprived of reason,—he felt the glow of sympathy, and determined to obey its impulse.

“Proceed,” said de Sevrac. The recollection of Paulina darted athwart his brain, and for a moment divided his attention.

“The friend departed.—The Count Monteleoni resolved to convict the man whom he believed to have been the seducer of innocence.—On meeting you, not knowing that the name of d’Angerville was that which you assumed; the plan which his friend had meditated, was not mentioned, though he had then frustrated its accomplishment; for on the preceding night he came to the house of Signor Lupo. We were astonished at so unexpected a visit, and cautiously concealed our uneasiness at your absence, till near the break of day, when four masked villains rushed abruptly into the room where we sat, and, seizing Sabina, endeavoured to force her from me.

“At this tremendous juncture the Count Monteleoni’s sword pierced the villain, whose arms encircled your shrieking child. He had no longer the power to hold her; a torrent of blood gushed from his wound, and his companions were glad to accomplish his escape, and to fly with precipitation from the scene of horror. The Count Monteleoni, who had two domestics armed in waiting, instantly conducted us to his own hospitable mansion.—Messengers were dispatched to find Monsieur d’Angerville, but in vain, and without your permission I did not venture to disclose your real name.”

At this moment the Count Monteleoni entered the saloon. The Marquis ran and hid his face



face on his bosom. He had not resolution to behold the man, whose life he had attempted so rashly, and to whom he owed the preservation of Sabina's honour.

"Noble de Sevrac!" exclaimed the Count, "blush not to recollect the honest indignation which a parent's fears provoked, and which humanity cannot but forgive. I was culpable without design, when I exposed you to a disgraceful accusation; let your attempt on my life balance the unfortunate account, and from this hour every obligation ceases." Monteleoni embraced the Marquis, and their mutual errors were consigned to oblivion. "I have only to make one request," said the Count, "which is, that you will never seek to discover the villain whom my sword has punished."—

"You know him then!" replied Monsieur de Sevrac, eagerly.

"I know him well!" said Monteleoni, "but I am under obligations to him, which nothing but the preservation of unprotected virtue should have made me violate."

Monsieur de Sevrac then produced the letter which was delivered to him on his return from Cortona. The instant Monteleoni glanced his eyes over it, he smiled. "This is the handwriting of that rascal Lupo!" said he, "the infamous agent of a still greater villain! But, my brave and noble friend!" continued he, "do not, I conjure you, contaminate your arm by making it the instrument for punishing such a reptile. He never will venture to appear again in Florence be assured; and if by chance you should meet him in any other place, recollect that a pander is beneath the chastisement of a man of honour!"

They

They now dispatched a messenger to the place where the Marquis had hired the carriage, who found the Abbe Le Blanc, overwhelmed with affliction, on account of Monsieur de Sevrac's sudden departure, in a state of mind so alarming. The joy was mutual when they met ; and the persecuted family united in blessing that Divine Power, which had rescued them once more from destruction.

CHAP. X.

"Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree,  
"Laden with blooming gold, hath need the guard,  
"Of dragon watch."——

MILTON.

EARLY on the following morning Monsieur de Sevrac, accompanied by the Abbe Le Blanc, repaired to the house of the artisan to whom he had offered the ring for sale. On their arrival, the first person they beheld, was the young man, whom the Marquis instantly recognized to be the same that had presented the packet, containing the purse with the twenty louis d'ors. Monsieur de Sevrac examined his features with earnest attention, and discovered in his unknown benefactor, the invalid whom he had left in so perilous a situation at Bologna: strong emotions of surprise and curiosity took possession of his mind, and he stood for some minutes looking at the stranger without uttering a syllable.

The

The young man oppressed by the fixed gaze of Monsieur de Sevrac, in vain endeavoured to avoid his penetrating eyes, and to conceal his own embarrassment: With a low and inarticulate voice he inquired their business, and offered to inform his master of their commands.

"I command nothing," replied the Marquis; "but I earnestly entreat that you will pardon me, if I desire the knowledge of your name."

"For what purpose?" said the young man, reddening, and disconcerted by the words and manner of Monsieur de Sevrac.

"The noblest purpose," answered the Marquis, "the return of grateful thanks, for the most generous and benevolent of actions!" The young man would have quitted the room, but Monsieur de Sevrac caught his hand and held him.

"Why endeavour to avoid an explanation that does honour to the name of philanthropy?" said the Marquis, "why shun the man who only came to seek you, for the purpose of making his acknowledgments?"

"For that very reason," answered the stranger, "I have no claim upon your gratitude; I did but return that, which was your own: you saved my life; and the least that I could do, was to preserve your property. The part which the moment of necessity compelled me to make use of, I have since by industry replaced."

"I cannot accept the wages of your toil. I cannot take from you that which you want yourself."

"I did



"I did not say so, Monsieur de Sevrac, when you relieved my necessities," replied the young man, somewhat mortified by the Marquis's refusal.

"Perhaps I have no occasion for the sum," cried Monsieur de Sevrac, self-reproved for having caused a moment's chagrin to so sensible a mind.—

"Then, millions have.—The world is full of sorrow!" replied the stranger, "you will find channels enough for the rich stream of humanity: and in a breast like your's, the source will never be exhausted!" At this moment the door was opened, and Marianna entered the room: She instantly threw herself on her knees, and embraced Monsieur de Sevrac's hand,—*"Oh! thou soul of benevolence!"* exclaimed Marianna, accept my tears; they are grateful tears of joy, the overflowings of a full heart!"—

"I cannot bear these agonizing effusions of gratitude," said the Marquis, "the torture which you inflict is insupportable. I do not deserve so severe a punishment. Indeed, Marianna, I do not." He raised her from the ground—she was overwhelmed by her sensibility. The master of the house interrupted the conversation, and the young man, snatching Marianna's arm, hurried her out of the room.

The Marquis then addressed the lapidary, "I wish," said he, "to know the name and history of the young persons who have just left us. Reasons of the utmost importance authorize my curiosity, all of which are highly

highly honourable to the objects that excite it."

"Gaston Lemoine is the name of the young man," replied the artisan, "he is a French emigrée, who has engaged himself with me to learn my trade; but whose mind and manners deserve a more exalted station. Alas! Signor; he is one of those unfortunate beings condemned to do penance for the crimes of others! driven from his country, he has nothing to begin the world with, but his virtues; and they are so nearly obsolete, that I fear they will scarcely pass current."

"His wife."—

"Is an angel!" interrupted the artisan, "endowed with the advantages of education, and blest by all the liberal gifts of nature, she supports herself, with honourable industry, by teaching music."

"Beautiful Marianna!" sighed the Marquis, "how does thy virtue eclipse the proudest, the most exalted of thy sex, where rank and splendour demand the adulation of the vulgar?"

"Her beauty is not equal to her virtue," said the lapidary, "though perhaps it is its greatest enemy. She has, indeed, been strongly tempted."—

"Lives there a man, capable of insulting so pure a mind?" interrupted de Seyrac, "a mind like Marianna's would awe the very soul of licentiousness, and that being must be dead to every sensation of humanity, who would not risk his life to annihilate such a monster."

VOL. II.

G

"Ah!

"Ah! Signor; but he is rich and powerful. He can command that, which will make poor honesty shrink from its noblest purposes. He could purchase the lives of twenty champions, who, in the cause of virtue, might attempt to oppose his wishes."

"Purchase the lives!" repeated the Marquis with horror.

The artisan smiled. "There are, Signor," said he, "stiletos, and hands to use them, that may be purchased in cases of necessity. And I believe few would be bold enough to encounter the vengeance of Monsieur de Briancour."

"De Briancour!" exclaimed de Sevrac; "perdition seems to follow that name! would he disturb the happiness of Marianna? Does he, with impunity, seek to undermine her peace; her husband's honour?"

"Her husband knows it not," replied the artisan, "she loves him too tenderly to endanger his existence."—

"Then I will be her protector," said Monsieur de Sevrac, "give me her address; I will watch her with the vigilance of a father: my wife shall be her friend, my daughter her companion." The Marquis took his leave of the artisan, and hastened to communicate the events of the morning to Madame de Sevrac and Sabina. The Count Monteleoni was present when the interesting story was unfolded. "I have seen Madame Lemione frequently," said he, "she was Paulina's instructor in that science, of which she is a perfect mistress; and what will interest your feelings,

feelings, while it awakens all the generosity of your nature, is the knowledge that I had the happiness to snatch her also, from the snares of the miscreant Lupo."

"Then," exclaimed Madame de Sevrac, while indignation glistened through the tear of sympathy, "de Briancour was the villain who insulted my daughter."

"You deceive yourself," replied the Count Monteleoni. "By my honour, I swear it was not Monsieur de Briancour. In a short period of time you shall know your enemy. Till then, I conjure you to be patient." The Marquis promised to comply with Monteleoni's entreaties; and Madame de Sevrac, with Sabina, hastened to the lodgings of Marianna.

On their arrival, they were informed that she was absent from home, attending to the duties of her profession. They waited a considerable time, but finding that she did not come, they left a letter of invitation, and returned to the Count Monteleoni's, where, to their infinite astonishment and distress, they beheld the doors barricaded by the strong hand of law; the house and effects of the generous Monteleoni seized for the sum of twenty thousand zechins; and legal possession taken, by the infamous avvocato, Lupo.

The Marquis had retired, with the Count, to the house of a friend, and the Abbe Le Blanc waited in the portico, to apprize Madame de Sevrac and Sabina of the event which had taken place. Their consternation was only to be equalled by their sorrow. They



beheld the friend, whose generous interposition had rescued them from ruffians, and whose humanity had afforded them an asylum from poverty, driven from his house, oppressed and insulted by a reptile; who armed with the stings of his profession, shielded by the high-sounding sanction of justice and the laws, pierced the heart of benevolence, while his own obdurate bosom was equally a stranger to the sensations of pity and remorse.

Again the Marquis had to seek a new habitation; and without delay he engaged apartments at the house of a musician. Madame de Sevrac had written letters to her relations in England; unfolding the secret of her misfortunes, and requesting their protection for herself and her associates in affliction, till the prospect before them should afford a more smiling aspect. Lady Susan Montrose was still living; but never having received the Marquis or her daughter, since their clandestine marriage, the proud mind of de Sevrac had invariably and obstinately shrunk from the idea of soliciting her assistance. But adversity rushes towards every gleam of hope, and the pride of resentment was subdued by the warmth of parental fondness. He looked towards that path, which would, perhaps, lead to Sabina's future happiness, and readily encountered the thorns that menaced his own footsteps.

The Count Monteleoni's affairs rendered a temporary concealment absolutely necessary. He quitted Florence, without apprizing any person whatever of the route which he intended to take;

take; but, previous to his departure, inclosed the sum of three hundred zechins to Monsieur de Sevrac with the following laconic note :

“ This trifle will be of no service to me, make use of it, and only think of repaying me, when I cease to be your friend.”

The Marquis most sincerely regretted the absence of the generous Monteleoni, unconscious that he was the author of his misfortunes. Rich, in comparison with what he had been during several weeks, he determined to find a solitary retreat, and there to wait patiently for the answers to Madame de Sevrac letters. The musician with whom they lodged, was employed to inquire for such a retirement, and after a few days had elapsed, he informed the Marquis that he could recommend an habitation which would precisely suit him. The sum which was demanded was trivial; without seeing the house, he engaged it for the term of two months, and early on the following morning set out for the *Vall' ombrosa*.

From the price demanded for the hire of their new abode, they concluded that it was decent and convenient, but no more; and their astonishment was not to be described, when they arrived at its entrance. Its situation was such as the most romantic imagination might conceive of Elysium! The fabric was constructed entirely with white marble, and in the most finished style of Italian architecture. It consisted of one floor, which was supported by pillars, forming colonnades

beneath, and a gallery round the outside ; which was fronted by a portico, descending by steps of Sienna stone, to a beautiful and luxurious garden. The roof was encircled with a net-work of yellow wire, and covered with orange, and other richly perfumed trees, from whose glowing parterre the eye commanded the most enchanting scenery. A verdant lawn sloped gently to the border of the Arno, where rows of lilac and willow, planted almost horizontally, nearly dipped their boughs in the stream that wandered along the valley.

The interior of this terrestrial paradise was no less voluptuous. The apartments were painted in various fashions, diversified by pannels of looking glass, and niches filled with groups of the most perfect sculpture. The columns that supported the building were twined round with eglantines and roses, which beginning to bud, filled every apartment with mild and delicious perfume.

In the vestibule they were welcomed by the musician who had selected their retreat. Monsieur de Sevrac was rapt in wonder : every thing seemed like enchantment !—He questioned the reality of what he saw ; and was almost tempted to believe that his senses deceived him. The musician assured him that the house had been let merely for the sake of having it inhabited ; that its owner required nothing but strict attention to the preservation of his property ; and, being his patron, allowed him the advantage of the profit arising from the contract.

Monseigneur

Monſieur de Sevrac would have relinquished the bargain, for he felt that the habitation was infinitely too splendid for the state of his finances : but the musician had demanded a deposit of the sum which they agreed for, before they quitted Florence ; and the Marquis had only to content himself with the loss of the money or to remain patiently amidst the luxuries of the *Vall' ombrosa*. The presentiment which is often fatally true, was not erroneous, when it told Monsieur de Sevrac that his new asylum would be the scene of momentous events. Reason suggested that some mystery was attached to the whole of this contract with the musician, and nothing but that dauntless spirit which repelled the very shadow of fear could have tempted him to abide by it. Wherever he trod, wherever he fixed his eyes, a something unaccountable and strange augmented his suspicions. The apartments, the groves, the various and luxurious scenes which presented themselves in every direction, seemed to unite in magical and dangerous fascinations : they looked like the rich tablets which the painter's hand bestows on a casket, destined to contain the most deadly poisons.

The change of situation was so striking to Madame de Sevrac and Sabina, that they were too fully occupied in exploring its beauties to think of the mystery which placed them in the *Vall' ombrosa* : so the weary traveller, while he stands on the margin of the precipice, which commands a variegated and sublime expanse, forgets that one step forward would annihilate his being.



On the evening of their arrival at the villa, Mademoiselle de Sevrac weary with wandering about the plantations, was hastening to join the Marquis and her mother, when at the angle of a winding walk, she observed through a thick grove of orange trees, a retreat which till then had escaped her notice. The sun was setting, and every object glowed with a more than usual animation: not a breath of air disturbed the fragrant branches that formed a covered walk to the entrance of a small but beautiful pavilion. The door was closed but not fastened; the steps were bordered with flowers, and the windows shaded by a slanting roof, from which an awning of latticed wood supported a canopy of interwoven foliage.

She entered the building, which presented to her view all the eastern luxury of a Turkish pavilion! the floor was covered with a rich carpet; a drapery of rose coloured silk, fastened to the middle of the ceiling, fell to the ground on all sides in ample folds, in the manner of a tent; round which a continued sofa, formed of downy cushions, completed the magic retreat, and fascinated the attention of Mademoiselle de Sevrac.

The setting sun, darting its last rays through the umbrageous canopy on the outside, softened the pink glow which the drapery shed on the interior of the pavilion. Sabina stood contemplating the luxurious solitude, scarcely believing it to be terrestrial! all that she had read of the abodes where fiction had placed the most romantic scenery, where genii, and all the race of supernatural creation dwelt, conveyed

veyed no idea of any thing like the Turkish pavilion. She threw herself on the encircling sofa, and, weary with rambling, her senses sunk into a delicious slumber, while the increasing shades of twilight stole over the sky, every moment darkening its lustre.

## C H A P. XI.

"—Can such things be,  
 "And overcome us, like a summer's cloud,  
 "Without our special wonder?"

SHAKESPEARE.

THE silence of the situation assisted to prolong Mademoiselle de Sevrac's repose, and the sky became totally dark, while she was yet sleeping. Had her mind been tranquil, had her heart been at ease, no place was more likely to prompt the most delicious slumber, than the pavilion where she rested. But she was too gloomily impressed with the dark colour of her fortune, to experience repose, and her dreams were in no degree influenced by the luxuries that surrounded her.

Fancy presented to her mind a phantom, who, with a fierce and terrific mien, led her over a wild and desert heath, till they came to a vast and solitary cavern, where the first  
 object

object which presented itself was the bleeding body of St. Clair. She thought that she gazed upon it with horror; clasped it to her bosom; and bathed every wound with agonizing tears. In a dark corner of the cave, shackled with chains, lay the Marquis de Sevrac; frenzy was in his eye, while he raved with the incoherency of a maniac. Sabina's imagination then descried a form, beautiful and radiant! which, descending from an opening chasm above her head, unfettered Monsieur de Sevrac, and recalled animation to the livid countenance of the mangled St. Clair. He rose and embraced her: his lip was icy cold; it almost petrified her cheek. The strong powers of fancy agitated her whole frame; her heart throbbed, and her limbs trembled. The voice of St. Clair awoke her from her dream, and she found herself surrounded by a melancholy gloom which terrified and amazed her.

As she rose from the sofa, by the dim light she could just discover the entrance of the pavilion: an unusual horror rushed to her heart; she had not power to move; the stilly rustling of the leaves which overhung the roof startled her; and the phantoms which her dream had conjured up seemed still visible to her waking senses.

She sighed deeply. The force of her disturbed imagination converted the luxurious pavilion into the cavern of slaughter and despair! She looked wildly round, every moment expecting to behold the frantic features of the Marquis, and the bleeding corpse of St. Clair. Her situation was terrible.

Several minutes elapsed; and Mademoiselle de Sevrac's horrors still increasing, at length she summoned resolution to advance a few paces: the sky  
was



was thickly covered with stars, and illumined by bright vapours, which shed an undulating gleam over the earth. She rushed towards the entrance of the pavilion, where, to her infinite consternation, again the form of St. Clair presented itself before her!

She recoiled with horror, shrieked, and fell on the sofa, overpowered by a sight so unexpected and terrific! The figure entered the pavilion, and was soon lost in the gloom which enveloped every object. Mademoiselle de Sevrac's heart throbbed as though it would leap from her bosom: she had not resolution to speak; she had scarcely the power to breathe; when a voice, low and persuasive, articulated "Fly me not; I must depart for ever!" It was the voice of St. Clair.

The sound of such tones, had her soul been on the confines of eternity, would have drawn it back to earthly sorrows: but she had wept over the sod which she considered as the grave of St. Clair; she believed him dead; and her blood almost congealed, when his voice again addressed her.

"At the break of day I must leave you; this is my last visit. Shun me not, you will see me no more!"

Had Mademoiselle de Sevrac's life been the forfeit of her silence, she could not at that moment have articulated a syllable: she rose from the sofa, and was gently stealing towards the threshold, when something caught her hand, and forcibly detained her.

"Rosine, tell me, why do you shun me?" cried St. Clair. "I have travelled post from Pisa to take my leave of you: at day-break I depart for Naples."

Sabina

Sabina could scarcely support her trembling frame. To know that St. Clair was still alive, filled her beating heart with undescrivable rapture ; but every transport was instantly changed to the most agonizing despair, when she heard, by his own confession, that he was devoted to another.

The strong emotions of pride and the resentment of insulted attachment overcame the tenderness of regret and the agitation of terror. She felt all the strength of returning fortitude, and stifled her indignation by the silence of contempt. Her cheek, which had been incessantly bathed with tears, now glowed with blushes ; she endeavoured to tear herself from him, but he still grasped her hand, and pressed it to his lips with the most impassioned ardour. After a pause of a few moments, he continued—

“ Have I deserved this chilling reception, Rosine ? Has some more distinguished lover supplanted the absent St. Clair ? Must this still and sacred solitude, which has so often been the scene of my felicity, now witness my humiliation ? Or has de Briancour discovered our intercourse ? Tell me, Rosine ; do not keep me in suspense. In a few hours I must leave Euseby : perhaps for ever !”

Mademoiselle de Sevrac was silent.

“ Yes,” continued St. Clair ; “ it must be so. Monsieur de Briancour has commanded you not to see me ; and you have promised to obey him. Yes ; he whose falsehood merits your abhorrence ; he exacts that fidelity which would bid you shun my presence, while he revels in the charms of Mademoiselle D’Angerville.”

Sabina

Sabina started. St. Clair felt the convulsive motion of her arm, and resumed his entreaties.

“ Well may his duplicity amaze you ; ” said he. “ But that which I tell you is no secret in Florence. Signor Lupo was the agent whose address won the beautiful emigrée. I met him on the road, as I returned from Pisa : he told me that she was the victim of Monsieur de Briancour.”

“ Then he told you a falsehood,” cried Mademoiselle de Sevrac, with a tone of stern indignation.

“ Heavenly powers ! ” exclaimed St. Clair. “ I know that voice ! ”

“ And, for the last time, you hear it,” said Mademoiselle de Sevrac.

St. Clair threw himself on his knees, and bowing his head almost to the ground, remained fixed as a statue.

“ Leave me, unkind St. Clair ! ” cried Mademoiselle de Sevrac ; “ nor insult my sorrows with a new effort of hypocrisy. I believed you dead : the wound which you received from the Marquis——”

“ What wound ?—when ?—” demanded St. Clair, starting from the ground.

“ In the wood, near Monte Carelli,” replied Sabina, “ on that fatal night when you encountered Monsieur de Sevrac. Ah, St. Clair ! the horrors of that night have been the source of anguish undescribable. I have mourned your loss ; too tenderly I have mourned it.”—She could not proceed ; a torrent of tears interrupted her ; and she rested on the shoulder of the astonished St. Clair, while he led her out of the pavilion.

“ What

"What new mystery will fate unfold?" cried he with a tremulous voice. "I have never seen the Marquis since the morning of my departure from the Chateau-neuf."

"Were you not near the convent of the Abbot Palmera, on the dreadful night when Arnaud was murdered?"

"Murdered! O horrible!" exclaimed St. Clair. "By whom?"

"Think not to conceal the barbarous deed," continued Mademoiselle de Sevrac; "these tears declare how much I pity even your rash attempt. St. Clair, but calm reflection must teach me to condemn it. Farewell! keep your own secret; I never will betray you. Depart for Naples; and, if you can, be happy."

"This is frenzy," answered St. Clair. "By all that is honourable or sacred to humanity, I swear, that I am ignorant of what you mean. I have never quitted Florence since my journey thither when I left you at the Chateau-neuf, except within the last month to Pisa; where——" He stopped abruptly.

At this moment Sabina heard the voice of Monsieur de Sevrac, who called to her from the portico.

"Ha!" exclaimed St. Clair; "is not that the voice of your father?"—"It is," replied Sabina. "Fly! fly! St. Clair, avoid him, till I can clear up these terrible deceptions."

"Fly from the man who struck me!" said St. Clair. "Infamous timidity! No, Mademoiselle de Sevrac; though I never should have sought a meeting with the Marquis, since Fate will have it so, I shall not shrink from the rencontre."

Again



Again Monsieur de Sevrac called. Sabina continued.

"I have no right to command you, and therefore must submit to your inhuman purpose. There was a time, when the entreaties of Sabina de Sevrac would have prevailed, and her eternal peace of mind have been an object of some importance to St. Clair. The pleasing dream that lulled my grief is vanished; and the fascinations of a more beloved mortal have armed your bosom against the touch of pity. Already wounded to the soul by an event, which I had no right to condemn, I scarcely hope for your compliance with a wish, which has both your pride and your resentment to contend with."

"Why would you render me infamous?" said St. Clair. "Why does your rash father thus seek the man whom he has injured?"

"Alas! he knows not that you live!" replied Mademoiselle de Sevrac. "He has not been long in Florence; and, under the feigned name of D'Angerville, he has remained unknown since his arrival." They now heard footsteps approaching at some distance.

"Oh God!" exclaimed Sabina, "how shall I bear to witness this rencontre? If pity owns one particle in the composition of your heart, spare me this pang, this agonizing pang, and save me from distraction."

"Say you will pardon me, Sabina! say you will forgive all that is past," cried St. Clair hastily.

"I will forgive anything, if you will be gone," replied Mademoiselle de Sevrac.

"I will defer my journey to Naples, and tomorrow evening, at twilight, I will be here again.

Meet

Meet me at the pavilion; I have a circumstance to disclose of the utmost importance. Your safety is its object. On this condition only will I leave you."

"How will you avoid the Marquis?"

"I have the key of the orange grove, which is close by the pavilion. Alas, too often have I entered this scene of unreal happiness by its means." The Marquis approached. St. Clair whispered, "Adieu! I shall expect you;" and instantly darted amongst the trees, which entirely concealed him.

Monsieur de Sevrac was astonished at finding Sabina alone; and remarked, as he took her hand, that it trembled. She informed him, that overcome by fatigue, she had fallen asleep, and that a dream had strangely alarmed and agitated her spirits. The Marquis inquired no further, and they proceeded towards the portico, where Madame de Sevrac waited with impatience.

At supper Sabina was more than usually pensive: yet there was a serenity in her countenance, a mild and cheerful smile, that charmed and consoled the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac. St. Clair was the slave of Rosine's beauty; but his mind was still devoted to Sabina. She had beheld him, like one raised from the grave; she had heard his voice, and felt the quick pulsation of that hand, which convinced her, that he was no phantom. She retired to her chamber; a thousand mingling sensations of pain and pleasure struggled in her bosom; she smiled even amidst her tears; she rejoiced, even at the instant that her heart was wrung with jealousy and doubt. One moment she fancied that the form of St. Clair was before her; the next, that she beheld

him the supplicating slave of her detested rival. Yet she knew that he lived ! and the dark book of fate still presented to her hopes a page of consolation.

At the first glimpse of day she quitted her chamber, and hastened to the pavilion : an instinctive something, which is beyond the divinations of wisdom, impelled her to visit the spot where she had experienced such contending conflicts. With a pleasing melancholy she entered the orange grove ; she fancied that she could trace his footsteps on the dewy turf ; she approached the paling which enclosed the plantation ; she beheld the marks of his carriage wheels, along the private road, which led to the villa. She flew to the pavilion ; the door which she had passed on the preceding night with St. Clair, was still open. She entered ; the idea that this enchanting retreat had been the temple of Rosine's triumphs, where she had been the idol of St. Clair's adoration, tortured her with new pangs, and, for a time, fixed her in mournful meditation.

While she recollected the inconstancy of St. Clair, something more tender than reproof stole into her bosom. " He meant not to distress me, for he did not know of my being here," said Sabina, with a sigh, as she looked towards Florence.

" Why should I condemn him ?" continued she, throwing herself on the sofa ; " he did not think of me." She rose hastily, and approached the door. " No ! No ! he did not think of me," repeated Mademoiselle de Sevrac, again falling on the sofa, and bursting into tears.

The

The Marquis and Madame de Sevrac soon after entered the pavilion. They found Sabina in an agony of sorrow, and with earnest solicitude demanded to know the cause. They seated themselves by her side, and with the most soothing entreaties implored her to reveal the cause of her sudden inquietude.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac, with some difficulty, stifled her emotion, and proposed returning with the Marquis to the house. She longed to discover all that she knew; but she dreaded the effect such a developement might have on the unprepared mind of Monsieur de Sevrac. Her eyes were full of tears whenever they encountered his; while her heart was, at the same moment, trembling with fear, and throbbing with impatience.

As they ascended the portico, "My love," said Monsieur de Sevrac, "there is something that afflicts you to which I am a stranger."

"I confess it," sighed Sabina.

"Whom does it interest so much as myself?" continued the Marquis.

"Ah! whom indeed!" cried Mademoiselle de Sevrac, throwing her arms round her father's neck, and hiding her face in his bosom.

"Tell me what occasions this perturbation, Sabina," continued the Marquis.

"Do not urge me at this agonizing moment—you shall know all to-morrow."

"Why, to-morrow?"

"Because by that time I shall be more tranquil," replied Mademoiselle de Sevrac. They entered the vestibule, and the instantly hastened to her chamber, where she remained till dinner.

The



The Marquis and Madame de Sevrac in vain endeavouring to account for her sudden change of manner, and depression of spirits. The broad glare of day at length began to subside, and Sabina, with a beating heart, stole from her chamber, to meet the beloved, though faithless object of her agonizing cares and hopeless affections.

## C H A P. XII.

" Oh! sacred LIBERTY!

" Wring'd from the summer's snare, from flatt'ring ruin,

" Like the bold stork, you seek the wintry shore,

" Leave courts, and pomps, and palaces to slaves,

" Cleave to the cold, and rest upon the storm."

BROOKE'S GUSTAVUS.

MADemoiselle de Sevrac's mind became every moment more and more agitated, as the hour advanced in which she had promised to meet St. Clair. The pride of resentment was considerably softened by the reflections of reason, when they told her, that she had no right to influence the conduct of one, who had never promised fidelity. She had heard him pronounce the name of Rosine, with all the ardour of a lover, but the person and mind of her rival were still unknown to her; and she concluded, from the conversation of the preceding night, that it was a connection, more of caprice than sentiment.—The reproaches of St. Clair, and the profligate character of the Count de Briancour, fully authorized the opinion, and in a great degree excited that contempt,

tempt, which is the strongest safeguard against the tenderness of regret.

Monsieur de Briancour, whose name is deeply connected with the fate of de Sevrac, was a cotemporary meteor in the Court of Versailles, where he had enjoyed many high and lucrative situations, while the Marquis was yet in his childhood. The wealth of de Briancour, was one of those overgrown monsters that helped to crush the throne, which his vices had long contaminated. Invested with command, and by nature fond of sway, he was the instrument of oppression, and the minion of a corrupt and tyrannical phalanx. Hourly enriching his favourites, and enslaving the people, he sheltered himself behind the screen of prerogative; and, while he kept the bastille in the dark perspective, beheld, without remorse, the last pangs of violated humanity.

Monsieur de Briancour had all the advantages which an aspiring and arrogant servant can have, over the mind of a weak and credulous master. He was an accomplished miscreant; he could command the most perverse adversary by his convivial manners; his smile was dangerous; his voice fawningly seductive; his eloquence powerful, and his power unbounded: he could flatter those whom he despised, and despise those who were his rivals in the vortex of ambition.

The Count de Briancour had quitted France on the first symptom of tumult; but having the command of almost countless treasure, he had at different periods secured such sums in the bank of Venice, as enabled him to revel in luxurious splendour; while the source which had

fed his inordinate rapacity, was stained with the blood of his deluded benefactors. But the humiliations of a kind and gentle master, made no impress on such a mind as de Briancour's. He who had so long steeled his breast against the sufferings of the million, was little touched by the fall of an individual : he had contributed to finish a course of infamy ; and he was the first to quit the ruin, which his unrelenting tyranny had promoted.

Pliant from subtilty, obstinate from pride, daring from ambition, and arrogant from power, Monsieur de Briancour fled from the scene of vengeance, and, like a pestilential disease, was destined to spread destruction wherever he resided. The Marquis, in the early part of his life, had been the favourite of de Briancour ; but, he was too generous, and too sincere to enjoy for any length of time, the friendship of such a patron. He felt that de Sevrac's good qualities frequently operated as antidotes to his pernicious counsels : and though he was too cunning to discover his secret hatred, he was ever on the watch to depreciate those virtues, which he had not courage to emulate.

Monsieur de Briancour had married a young and beautiful woman, whose age might nearly have allowed her the title of his grand-daughter. She was scarcely seventeen, when she was bestowed on a libertine, who, at the age of sixty, had proved that time is not always the harbinger of wisdom. Two summers only witnessed her cheerless elevation ; for though placed in the zenith of courtly splendour, she was not happy. Her union was the choice of her parents, while her heart confessed a more suitable attachment.

The



The object of her affections was young and amiable. His father, the Chevalier D'Albert, had distinguished himself in the American war; and the success which cannot fail to attend that warfare where every arm is nerved for individual benefit, being often the subject of discourse, awakened in his son that spirit of liberty, which has since produced the emancipation of millions. Sent, with legions of his countrymen, to aid an enterprising people in the cause of freedom, the Chevalier D'Albert panted for that blessing, which he had been taught to bestow on others.

On his return to France at the conclusion of the war, he beheld his brave comrades, still groaning under the most abject slavery. He saw their laurels wither in the very sun-shine of the court; and their limbs, mutilated in the field of conquest, still shackled with the fetters of despotism. The honest indignation of his soul was awakened at the sight; and, after secluding himself for a few tedious years in his native province, he expired, broken hearted. In his dying moments he sent for his son, and, with an impressive ardour, which seemed like nature's last effort in the cause of her violated rights, exclaimed, as the fleeting breath trembled on his lip, "My boy, live free, or perish!"

It was three years after the death of the Chevalier D'Albert, that his son became enamoured of the lady, who was destined to be the wife of the Count de Briancour. He loved her; and he was beloved. He saw her led a victim to the altar; and he resolved to make that altar tremble: for, it was not the consecrated fane of religion, where the heart pours forth that incense which soars on the wings of truth to heaven:

it

it was not the deed of moral virtue, sanctioned by holy vows, and rendered beautiful by the approving smile of love and inclination: it was the mart of mere worldly traffic; the scene of barbarous compulsion; the triumph of avarice and ambition over all the laws that are sacred to humanity, and the overbearing tyranny which, dealt from the court to the nobles, descended from the nobles to the people.

A few months previous to the commencement of the revolution, Monsieur D'Albert, while hunting with the King in the Bois de Vincennes, received a violent contusion in passing hastily beneath the branch of an overhanging tree. He was taken up to all appearance lifeless, and carried to a neighbouring chateau for succour. It was the abode of the Count de Briancour. D'Albert had never seen the object of his affections since her marriage, for it had been the study of his life to avoid her: and his returning reason was marked by recollections, which made him regret that he had not been annihilated.

Madame de Briancour's sensations were no less acute than those of Monsieur D'Albert; she was bathed in tears, and the object of her early and unconquerable passion was kneeling before her, when the Count de Briancour abruptly entered the apartment.

Before night Monsieur D'Albert received a lettre de cathet, with orders not to approach within fifty miles of Paris, on pain of imprisonment. The victim of de Briancour's jealousy knew that there was nothing to be done, but to submit patiently: his enemy was master of that talisman which had doomed hundreds to perish,

unseen and unregarded: he had the power to condemn his oppressed countrymen, to worse than death, to that terrestrial hell, the dungeon of the *bastille*!

He departed, he passed along the boulevards, where the outward smile of gaiety concealed the stifled sorrows of the multitude. The evening promenade was thronged with all ranks of people: the splendid equipages of the nobility passed in gaudy succession, while the honest bourgeois, the ingenious artist, and the contemplative philosopher, were permitted to behold their magnificence, and to toil through the cloud of dust, which was raised by the slow progress of the gilded cavalcade.

D'Albert sighed when he recollected that he was commanded to quit the metropolis; not because he thereby relinquished the pleasurable scenes which it outwardly exhibited, but because his journey was a matter of compulsion. All the spirit of his departed father seemed at that moment to animate his bosom. "Live free, or perish," the last words of the veteran soldier, vibrated on his imagination. He advanced slowly along the boulevards, till he came to that spot, which presented to his view the strong battlements of the *bastille*. He checked his horse, he contemplated the scene of horror; the flush of indignation glowed on his face, and unable any longer to bear the agonies of reflection, with averted eyes, he proceeded on his journey.

Darkness had nearly enveloped the world, when at a short distance from Paris, he met the carriage of Madame de Briancour. He called to the coachman, who instantly stopped—D'Al-

bert

bert approached the window, "One last adieu!" said he, "if but to sweeten exile!" Madame de Briancour fainted, while the Count her husband, mad with rage and jealousy, discharged his pistol: the fire was returned, and de Briancour fell.

Monsieur D'Albert believing that he had killed his antagonist, endeavoured to escape; but the domestics seized and secured him. He was conveyed to prison, accused of attempting to assassinate the court favourite; of resisting the authority of the *lettre de cachet*, and, a few days after was condemned to suffer death. The adventure excited an universal interest in every bosom. Every heart pitied the unhappy lovers, and the victorious de Briancour was by all parties greeted, with—

"Curse, not loud, but deep."

At this terrible crisis there was but one man in the court of Versailles who had resolution to oppose de Briancour. It was the Marquis de Sevrac. He was the friend of D'Albert's gallant father, and he exerted all his interest to preserve the son, whom he had never seen since he was an infant. Through his interest the punishment of death was mitigated, and the unfortunate prisoner was *only* sentenced to perpetual exile.

The benevolence of de Sevrac's heart did not end here. A small pension which had been paid to the chevalier D'Albert, was by the Marquis continued to the son: and he set out once more on his melancholy journey.

Madame de Briancour was, shortly after, conveyed to an old chateau in Gascony, where she



was strictly guarded, and denied all intercourse with society. She had been purchased, as the merchant buys the slave; and her lot was more terrible than even that of the ill-fated negro. He is destined to toil, to shrink from the scourge, to smart beneath a burning sun, and to groan under the severity of an inhuman master! But the wedded captive, whose liberty is bartered for wealth, endures the most excruciating tortures of mental agony. Weeks, months, and years, present a succession of miseries; a series of conflicts between the fine affections of the soul, and the moral virtues which harmonize society.

At length, news arrived at Paris, that the afflicted Madame de Briancour had struggled for a short period with her adverse fortune; till grief destroyed her health, and, in the very spring of life, had consigned her to a sepulchre!

A few weeks after this intelligence came, the mighty effort for freedom burst forth in France, Monsieur D'Albert flew to the scene of convulsion, and was one of the first that forced the walls of the bastille. He beheld the black towers tumbling to the earth; while wretches who had almost forgot the light of heaven, were led forth from their abodes of anguish, amidst the loud acclamations of the shouting multitude! while nature triumphed; and surrounding nations heard with astonishment, of the proudest energies which humanity is capable of evincing.

D'Albert now looked with rapture for the moment in which he might prove his attachment to Madame de Briancour: for he knew that, of all men living, her husband was the most obnoxious to the people. But she had found an asylum where every sorrow was at rest; while the

the zeal with which he expressed himself in her favour, and the regret which he evidently experienced for her loss, excited the jealousy of his enemies, and awakened strong suspicions that he was no friend to the cause of freedom. The insidious cabals of envy continued hourly to undermine his safety; and in a few weeks he was proscribed as a pensioner of the court, and the lover of Madame de Briancour.

At the moment when the scaffold was preparing for him, Monsieur D'Albert fled to Languedoc. There he met the beautiful Mademoiselle de Fleury. Time had obliterated the pangs which he felt for the loss of one, whom, if living, he had no chance of possessing; Mademoiselle de Fleury had seen him at Paris; she remembered his father; she sympathized in his misfortunes; she loved, and she married him.

Madame D'Albert was the protégée of an old dutchess, who had adopted her in her infancy. The union which she had formed, without daring to consult her patroness, gave offence that was not to be pardoned, and she was driven from the roof which had long sheltered her, with no friend in the universe, but the banished object of her affections.

## C H A P. XIII.

" The charm dissolves apace ;  
 " And as the morning steals upon the night,  
 " Melting the darkness, so their rising senses  
 " Begin to chase the ignorant fumes, that mantle  
 " Their clear reason.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE sun had set, and the evening began to close, as Mademoiselle de Sevrac descended the steps of the portico to meet St. Clair. Though she felt an unusual degree of courage, she was not sorry that the dusk of twilight rendered every object indistinct.—She hoped, that pride and resolution would prevent her shedding a tear ; she was conscious that the innocence of her heart had no reason to raise a blush upon her cheek ; and yet she was pleased at the reflection, that the gloom which surrounded her, was calculated to conceal either the one or the other.

Sabina had so long endured the anguish of supposing that St. Clair was dead, that the idea of parting from him living was a secondary sorrow. She was anxious to have those proofs which would exonerate her father ; and at the same

same time revive the good opinion which she wished to entertain of St. Clair : reasons so cogent, added to the strong impulse of curiosity, urged her to hear his extenuation, and, if possible, to learn the particulars of his attachment to Rosine.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac's mind was agitated with hope and fear at the moment when she reached the entrance of the pavilion. She was on the point of returning, but reflection told her, it would be, perhaps, her last interview with St. Clair ; and that it was of infinite importance to the future peace and reputation of the Marquis. She strolled about the orange grove till every object was entirely wrapped in darkness ; and apprehensive that either an unforeseen event, or want of inclination detained St. Clair, she was proceeding towards the house, when she heard some one approaching on horse-back.

She flew to the private door which opened to the road, and unbolted it with eagerness ; the horseman alighted, and, taking her hand, led her to the pavilion. Not a word was uttered ; there was a trembling perturbation in the hand that firmly grasped Sabina's, as she was hurried along the winding path, that terrified and surprised her. As soon as they entered, the door was closed ; her fears now became ungovernable ; " Ah ! St. Clair ! " said Mademoiselle de Sevrac, " what horror do you meditate ? Is this the reward of my unbounded confidence ? "

" Rash girl, it is not St. Clair that holds you," replied the stranger, " I promised to visit you again, and I have kept my word. Tremble not ; if you are silent, you are safe ; it is not you that I am in search of."



"What do you seek?" cried Sabina, almost expiring with terror.

"A shadow that haunts me day and night: a never tiring fiend, that comes perpetually betwixt me and my repose—a phantom."—

"What phantom?" inquired Mademoiselle de Sevrac.

"Revenge!" answered the stranger, whom she now discovered to be the same that had extorted her oath, while he had menaced the destruction of the Marquis and St. Clair.

"Heaven defend my father!" cried Sabina, "is it his life you seek?"

The villain muttered curses. "You are in my power," said he, "but I aim at a more important sacrifice. This poniard shall loose a torrent of blood which shall appease a restless spirit, even though I perish in it."

Mademoiselle de Sevrac endeavoured to escape: he caught her arm; "you will only bring destruction on yourself," cried he, "you have no Monteleoni now to save you. I have yet a stiletto for him, when my great act of vengeance is accomplished."

"Monteleoni! Oh, Heavens! It is the same!" exclaimed Sabina.

"I meant to have placed you in safe hands," cried he, "had not that officious dotard rescued you."—At this moment, footsteps approached near the back of the pavilion, "Ha!" muttered the ruffian, "here comes one of my victims!" Mademoiselle de Sevrac fell on her knees, and conjured him to be merciful; "why do you seek to destroy a being who never has offended you?" cried she, bursting into tears.

"While

"While he lives I am not safe," replied the stranger, "I thought that he had quitted Florence, but Rosine was honest when she apprized me of this night's visit."

"Rosine! Did she apprize you? Oh! false St. Clair!" cried Mademoiselle de Sevrac.

The footsteps now reached the pavilion, and Sabina's blood almost congealed with horror when they stopped at the entrance, and she heard her name pronounced by the Marquis.

"Oh, God! it is my father!" cried Sabina in a low voice. The villain threw her from him, and hastily uttering, "Remember," rushed towards the door.—

"Fly!" cried Sabina, "fly from the poniard of an assassin!" The Marquis rushed into the pavilion; at that moment St. Clair arrived; and the ruffian availing himself of the darkness, escaped.

"Villain! villain!" said St. Clair, seizing the Marquis,—“is it you who would destroy me?”

"St. Clair!" exclaimed de Sevrac, almost petrified with consternation; "Does St. Clair still live?" At this moment the Abbe Le Blanc and Madame de Sevrac entered the orange grove, with flambeaux, and discovered a scene which no language can perfectly describe. The Marquis and St. Clair each grasped by the other; while Sabina stood near them, pale, trembling, and unable to explain the mystery.

"Then my suspicions at the chateau-neuf, were well founded," cried St. Clair, "and I am convinced at last that it is you, Mon-

seigneur de Sevrac, who are determined to destroy me." The Marquis was at a loss to comprehend the meaning of his words, till Sabina entreated that they would return to the house, and hear her explanation.

She unfolded the adventure which took place near Pianoro, where the oath was extorted from her; and she declared that the person who had escaped from the pavilion, was the same ruffian from whom the Count Monteleoni had so lately rescued her. Astonishment took possession of every mind, and each was at a loss to account for such persevering villainy. St. Clair proposed returning to Florence that night; but by the persuasions of de Sevrac and his family, he was induced to relinquish his intention. The remainder of the evening passed in conversation, and it was late when they retired to their several apartments.

St. Clair was wholly unable to comprehend the series of events which seemed to crowd so rapidly one on the other. He was convinced that Mademoiselle de Sevrac's story was entirely artificial; and he was unwilling to believe that a man, whose education and general tenour of mind were highly enlightened, could serve as a subterfuge, to avoid endangering his personal safety. He had witnessed proofs of the Marquis's fortitude, when the awful moment of annihilation menaced him on the scaffold; and conscious that he had never injured him, he was tardy in admitting an opinion, that a liberal and cultivated mind could cherish a malicious purpose, without some

some just and powerful motive to give it sanction.

The Marquis was equally inclined to view the extraordinary succession of wonders through the clear medium of reason. He loved and respected St. Clair: and it was impossible that a being like de Sevrac, warm to all the noblest sensations of humanity, should deliberately injure one, to whose interference he owed his existence. Sabina had fully explained the insult which the Marquis supposed he had received at the chateau-neuf; and had not the sanctified hypocrite, Palerma, by his malicious insinuations, sown new seeds of discontent, the whole of the transaction would then have been buried in oblivion; at least as far as it was connected with the Marquis's feelings.

St. Clair passed a sleepless night; he had more grief to encounter than was known to the family of de Sevrac: he had yet a pang to struggle with, which had long corroded every fibre of his heart. When he quitted the chateau-neuf, he adored Sabina; he sympathized in the misfortunes of her father; and he recoiled with horror from the thought of cherishing a dishonourable passion. He departed, like one flying from the miseries of despair; he travelled straight, and with the utmost expedition, not stopping till he reached Florence, where he was, in a few days, presented to Monsieur de Briancour, whose house, or rather palace, was situated on the banks of the Arno, not far from the Auberge, where the Marquis and his family first lodged on their arrival.

It



It was in the luxurious abode of Monsieur de Briancour that St. Clair found Mademoiselle Rosine D'Orvilliere. She had been an opera dancer at Paris, and had emigrated with her profligate enamorado. Mademoiselle Rosine required no farther grounds to establish her hopes of a new conquest, when she was informed that St. Clair was an Englishman. The many instances wherein her countrywomen had duped and laughed at *Milor Anglois*, convinced her that success would attend her projects, and profit repay her for the labours of putting them in practice. All the arts of intrigue were called forth for the purpose of accomplishing her plan; at the same juncture that a circumstance occurred, which tended, in a great measure, to accelerate her triumph.

Monsieur de Briancour was ordered by his physicians to visit the baths of Pisa for ten or twelve days; and on the morning after he had presented St. Clair to Rosine, he quitted Florence for that purpose. His gallic mistress took her leave of him with all the outward signs of sorrow: she wept, and sighed; and on the evening of his departure gave a magnificent supper, to divert her melancholy, and evince her hospitality to his new acquaintance.

On his arrival at the scene of profligate extravagance, St. Clair was ushered through a spacious anti-chamber, where a train of domestics, in gaudy liveries, bowed as they announced the visitors. The titles of *Altezza*, *illustrissimo*, and "*eccellenza*," re-echoed from room to room, till they entered the splendid saloon,

loon, where the false enchantress presided. A graceful confusion seemed to disconcert her; when St. Clair made his bow of introduction. Her whole conversation turned upon the beauty and liberality of the English nation: she complimented St. Clair on every thing he did; and expressed her admiration of his manners and his wit, while she laughed at his credulity, and anticipated his disgrace. Every thing round her was marked with the most expensive profusion: the apartments were decorated with flowers which filled the air with the most enchanting perfumes; the most luxurious table, music, singing, dancing, and wine, intoxicated the senses of St. Clair, and he was wild with rapture.

On the following morning he again visited Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere. She received him at her toilette, where all that studied negligence and artificial simplicity could conjure up, was displayed to fascinate her slave. All her *routine* of graces was called forth: she was, by turns, gay, pensive, impassioned, languishing, meek, animated, jealous, severe, and tender.— Her dress was calculated to heighten every charm, and to conceal every imperfection: her looks, her actions, her every word, would have discovered the practised dissimulation of Rosine to any indifferent observer; but St. Clair was blinded by the brilliancy of his conquest, and believed himself the happiest of mortals, at the same moment that he was the most to be commiserated.

Before he quitted the toilette of Rosine, a party was arranged for her box at the opera in the evening. The hours seemed to pass slowly

slowly till the moment arrived, and St. Clair had no wish but to appear amiable in the eyes of Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere: he flew to the place of appointment, where he found her decked with all the paraphernalia of eastern magnificence! There she affected the most cautious reserve; spoke with apprehension of the jealousy which would wound the bosom of Monsieur de Briancour; and pretended to tremble at the envy which the attentions of her new lover would excite in the circles of rank and gallantry. St. Clair was not conscious that while he fancied himself the most favoured, the most fortunate of mankind, he was the object of universal pity. The wife condemned him, the vicious laughed at him. His attentions, nevertheless, were unceasing; day after day she was the object of perpetual adoration; and he believed himself distinguished as the most envied of mortals, at the moment when he purchased, at an enormous price, those favours from which many of the lowest of her countrymen would have shrunk with abhorrence.

Whenever Monsieur de Briancour was at Cortona, the house at Florence was the temple of assignation; (it was in St. Clair's way thither that Mademoiselle de Sevrac had twice seen him from the window of the Auberge;) and when they were liable to interruption from the presence of Rosine's ostensible protector, the villa at *Vall' ombrosa* was the rendezvous of duplicity. But St. Clair soon discovered that the sums which his folly lavished on Rosine were shared by her dependants; and

among whom Signor Lupo was not only a convenient minion, but a favoured lover.

A few days after Monsieur de Sevrac's arrival at Florence, St. Clair was sent for by express to Pisa: a near relation, who was proceeding towards Naples, required his company, and the novelty of his intrigue with Rosine being over, all its attractions began to subside, and he was not grieved to end it. He was no longer the object of universal conversation: he excited no curiosity, created no surprize, and he had at last discovered that interest more than affection influenced every thought of the inconstant and rapacious D'Orvilliere.

St. Clair now thought it was his turn to play the hypocrite, and, actuated by jealousy and mortification, he resolved to take a final farewell of Mademoiselle Rosine. With this intention he arrived at the *Valpambrosa*, on the night when he had the first interview with Sabina: on the following morning, he called at Monsieur de Briancour's, with a view to explore the mystery which had placed the Marquis de Sevrac and his family at the villa of Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere. By his curiosity he betrayed himself. Rosine's vanity was piqued, and mutual reproaches produced mutual discoveries; St. Clair avowed the highest respect for Sabina's virtues, and his determination, on that night to acquaint the Marquis, under whose roof he had placed his family: this intelligence was immediately conveyed to the assassin.

St. Clair had been absent from Florence ever since three days after Monsieur de Sevrac's



rac's arrival ; he had, therefore, no opportunity of making any discovery till the hour of his meeting Sabina at the pavilion. When Signor Lupo informed him that Monsieur de Briancour had obtained the beautiful D'Angerville, St. Clair was not conscious that the supposed victim was Mademoiselle de Sevrac ; and, being fully convinced of Rosine's infamy, he felt a degree of pleasure in discovering an event that would humble her arrogance, and teach her to feel the retaliation of her lover.

The concealed ruffian's declaration to Sabina, that he was informed of St. Clair's visit by Mademoiselle Rosine, determined him to take such steps as should compel her to reveal his name. He had two powerful reasons for anticipating a discovery ; for he was convinced that, if fear would not induce her to betray the villain, interest would ; he knew that gold would bribe her to commit any crime, which would not absolutely endanger her life ; and he was resolved to spare no pains or expence that might lead to an elucidation of such infinite importance.

## C H A P. XIV.

"—— Vengeance in the lurid air  
 "Lifts her red arm, expos'd and bare;  
 "On whom the rav'ning brood of fate  
 "Who lap the blood of sorrow wait."

COLLINS.

EARLY in the morning the family assembled at breakfast, where a full explanation of all that had passed between Mademoiselle de Sévrae and St. Clair on their first meeting at the pavilion, convinced the Marquis that his interview was unpremeditated, as far as concerned Sabina. Their next consideration was how to arrange some safe and probable plan, for the detection of the villain who had occasioned so much consternation.

The assassin had inadvertently confessed that Rosine informed him of St. Clair's assignation with Sabina; the consciousness of guilt, and the confusion which seldom fails to attend it, had thrown him off his guard, and afforded a clue to the detection of his crime, of which  
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the Marquis and St. Clair were determined to avail themselves, After a short consultation, they proposed setting out for Florence, in order to compel Mademoiselle D'Orville to make such discoveries as should bring the offender to punishment, and release St. Clair and de Sevrac from persecutions so dangerous.

Madame de Sevrac, who trembled for the safety of her husband, endeavoured to dissuade them from so perilous an undertaking: she represented all the horrors to which they would expose themselves, all the united artifices of Rosine and Signor Lupo, even if they were fortunate enough to escape the poniard of the assassin. But the Marquis and St. Clair were armed with resolution to brave every danger, and determined not to rest satisfied till the mystery was fully developed.

They travelled with the utmost expedition, and on their arrival at Florence, instantly hastened to the house of Monsieur de Briancour. He was absent from home, and Mademoiselle Rosine engaged with company. St. Clair pressed earnestly for an immediate interview, but all his entreaties for access, till the evening, met with a positive refusal. Ten o'clock was the hour appointed, and the Marquis, with St. Clair, after a short visit to Marianna, proceeded to make enquiries respecting the affairs of the Count Monteleoni.

His house was still in the possession of legal harpies; and no one would tell what was become of its penerous master. The sum for which his effects were seized was large, and his

his creditor inexorable. The Count Monteleoni was not rich, and his generosity had ever been beyond his means. The splendid fortune of Signora Paulina, which she inherited from her deceased mother, was so shackled by her own mental derangement, that no part of it could be applied to the necessities of her father; otherwise the occasion of his present distress would have demanded her interference.

Monsieur de Sevrac dined at St. Clair's lodgings, where the latter unfolded the progress of his connection with the deceitful Rosine; explained the mystery of the blow in the wood, near the chateau-neuf; and convinced the Marquis, that he had been, ever since that period, resident at Florence. De Sevrac was now at a loss to guess whom he had encountered, and what the person could have been, whose grave had proved the source of so many interesting events: he knew that Armand was dead; and he therefore supposed that his confederate was Ravillon. After some minutes of serious reflection, he concluded that it could have been no other person; St. Clair was of a similar opinion; and they waited impatiently for the hour of rendezvous.

They were punctual to a moment. St. Clair was informed by the porter at the gate of Monsieur de Briancour, that he was to be admitted: but that Mademoiselle D'Orville would, on no account whatever, receive the Marquis de Sevrac. The singularity of this sudden objection astonished them, at the same time that it awakened strong suspicions of some new and premeditated mischief. It was in vain that de Sevrac endeavoured to dissuade St. Clair from entering



entering the house of Monsieur de Briancourt: he was determined not only to risk every danger, but to explore the mysteries which hourly augmented: and for that purpose he hastened to the apartment of Rosine.

She received him with contemptuous effrontery; smiled at his agitation; refused to answer his interrogatories; and set his suspicions wholly at defiance. The agony he suffered, the shame which glowed on his cheek, when he beheld himself the dupe of such a monster, only served to sustain her purpose. Every word that he had uttered in praise of Sabina, at their last interview, now recurred to her mind, and she panted for an opportunity to gratify her vengeance, and defeat her rival.

St. Clair began to grow impatient, and urged her to be candid: he represented the dangers to which an innocent family would be exposed, by her persevering silence; he spoke with generous enthusiasm of de Sevrac's noble and exalted nature, while he pictured, in the most lively colours, his persecutions, and that of his forborn companions. But the eloquence which pleads for distressed virtue, cannot touch the mind which is darkened by ignorance, and contaminated by vice. Low, subtle, rapacious, profligate, daring, and uneducated, Rosine D'Orvilliere had nothing to boast but beauty, nothing to exercise but art. The very commendation which St. Clair bestowed on de Sevrac and his family, instead of softening her bosom, inflamed it to hatred, and strengthened her resolution to afflict them without mercy.

After many entreaties on the part of St. Clair, and much insolence on that of Rosine, the  
rose,

rose, and, quitting the room, went into an adjoining saloon; where she remained several minutes, perfectly silent. Time advanced rapidly, and St. Clair was beginning to lose all patience, when Mademoiselle D'Orville returned.

"Are you more inclined to be reasonable?" said she, on entering the apartment.

"Will you listen to the pleadings of humanity?" replied St. Clair. "Will you rescue a defenceless family from ruin and disgrace?"

"I do not comprehend you," cried Rosine, with affected indifference.

"You know the reptile," said St. Clair, "who met Mademoiselle de Sevrac in the pavilion at the *Vall' ombrosa*."

"I do, indeed!" answered she, with a glance of indignation.

"Name him?"

"He is now before me," replied Mademoiselle D'Orville.

"This is no time for trifling," cried St. Clair. "This is an hour of important events; and, while I have life, I will not shrink from my resolution."

"Believe me, it will not last you long," cried Rosine, equivocally.

St. Clair was too much irritated by her answers, to observe their tendency: he was not accustomed to that *s finesse* which characterises a mind like Mademoiselle D'Orville's, and hastily resumed the conversation.

"Why will you not receive the Marquis de Sevrac?"

"Because he is an assassin," replied she.

"Horrible falsehood!" exclaimed St. Clair.

Rosine

Rosine smiled.

"Who could have uttered such a base and infamous calumny?" continued St. Clair.

"I had it from one who is incapable of slander," replied she. "Signor Lupo."

"Your lover!"

"My friend;" said Rosine, angrily.

"The pander of Monsieur de Briancour."

Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere started.

"Yes," continued St. Clair, "the mean, the despicable wretch, who would have ensnared Mademoiselle de Sevrac; whose infamy was detected, and whose plans were frustrated by the Count Monteleoni."

"Speak, St. Clair, explain;" cried Rosine, with agitation.

"The matter may be unfolded in a few words," said he. "Sabina is lovely; the Marquis unfortunate; Monsieur de Briancour profligate; and Signor Lupo mercenary."

"Proceed; you torture me!" cried Rosine.

"You, who have never been faithful cannot reproach the infidelity of your lover!" said St. Clair.

"But I can resent the perfidy of Signor Lupo," answered she, while her cheek reddened with rage and disappointment. "He shall repent this act of duplicity; he, at least, shall tremble at my vengeance."

"He will do well never to appear again," said St. Clair. "The injured de Sevrac will not fail to chastise him; and he will find the protection of Monsieur de Briancour but a slender subterfuge."

"The protection of Monsieur de Briancour!" repeated Rosine with astonishment, "does Sig-  
nor

nor Lupo rely on *him* for protection? what claim has he to the friendship of a man, by whom he is detested?"

"And yet, by whom he is employed in the most important mischiefs. It was to Signor Lupo that the Marquis de Sevrac had nearly owed the ruin of his daughter," said St. Clair.

"I comprehend you!" replied Rosine, "Oh! what a monster is this vile Lupo! He told me, that pity for de Sevrac's misfortunes induced Monsieur de Briancour to shelter him and his family, at the *Vall' ombrosa*: deceived by his persuasions, I consented to a measure, which I considered of no farther importance, than merely an act of charity."

"Was it from Monsieur de Briancour, that the Marquis accepted an asylum?"

"No," replied Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere; "he was unwilling to wound the delicacy of de Sevrac, and therefore made one of his creatures, the negociator of a contract, by which he was to pay a trifling sum for the hire of the villa, merely to conceal his motive."

Their conversation was interrupted by a servant, who came to say that supper was served. Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere entered the adjoining saloon, and St. Clair followed; the domestics retired to the anti-chamber, and they were once more left tete-a-tete. The subtle Rosine now assumed a more gentle demeanour: she rallied him on his impetuosity, reproached his inconsistency, ridiculed Mademoiselle de Sevrac, and pressed him to sup with her. "If you will be less violent," said she, "I will be more candid."

"Will



"Will you name the villain who committed the outrage at the *Vall ombrosa*? Who alarmed the persecuted, the amiable Sabina? Will you give up the scoundrel Lupo?" cried St. Clair.

"I will!" said Rosine with an exulting tone which she could not suppress. "I will give him up! But not till the moment of my revenge arrives.—It is not far distant."——

There was a something horribly energetic in her manner, as she pronounced these words. "Come St. Clair," continued she, taking his hand and pointing to a chair. "This will be a night of wonderful exploits." She trembled, and her cheek frequently changed colour. St. Clair began to apprehend some terrible attempt against the life of, either himself, or de Sevrac, and again conjured Rosine to be explicit. "In less than an hour you shall know all," said she; "therefore if you are not content to wait so short a time, you may depart, and the secret shall remain inviolate."

St. Clair walked hastily about the saloon; impatience and resentment rendered him almost frantic. He knew that Mademoiselle D'Orville was capable of any crime; and that Monsieur de Briancour's wealth might purchase needy villains, whose stilettos would securely perpetrate the most atrocious deeds: yet he was determined not to relinquish his pursuit, even though his life should be the forfeit of his temerity. Rosine remained at table, and frequently invited St. Clair to partake of her supper; but he obstinately refused to comply with her entreaties, and continued traversing the saloon in the utmost perturbation, till, thirsty with rage, he filled a glass from a flask which stood

stood on the table, drank a large draught, and throwing himself on the sofa, waited for the promised discovery.

Mademoiselle Rosine was summoned to speak to a friend in the adjoining room; as she rose hastily, she overset the flask, and its contents streamed on the floor. St. Clair counted the moments during her absence, till an unaccountable stupor suddenly came over his senses, and he fell asleep.

During this momentous period Monsieur de Sevrac remained in the street, walking to and fro, before the entrance of de Briancour's house: midnight came, and St. Clair not appearing, he began to feel alarmed for his safety. He was ascending the steps of the portico, when he discovered two men stealing cautiously beneath the colonnade; he retreated, and placing himself in a dark corner, resolved to detect their proceedings. They whispered low, but still remained in the obscurity which rendered them almost invisible: the Marquis continued to watch them with a lynx's eye, and standing close in the niche, fortunately escaped their observation.

Some time elapsed, while they continued at intervals to whisper, and to peep from their hiding place. The lamps in the portico were nearly exhausted, and the streets were perfectly silent. The Marquis scarcely breathed; he was unarmed, and knew that he would have little chance of victory in contending with two determined assailants; to quit his niche would be equally dangerous to himself, and perhaps fatal to St. Clair. While de Sevrac was ruminating on the singularity of his dilemma the door of Rosine's abode was gently opened. A man

came forth; the villains assailed him; de Sevrac rushed forward and wrested a poniard from one of them; the other fled; and the person, whom he thought he had rescued, fell lifeless on the steps of the portico.

The assassins as they escaped, cried "murder." The guard instantly arrived, and the Marquis was arrested as the perpetrator of the horrid deed. The victim was borne into the vestibule, where, to the consternation of all present, they discovered that it was the corpse of Monsieur de Briancour.

Rosine alarmed by the voices of the domestics, hastened to the scene of terror, and as soon as she beheld the lifeless body, exclaimed, "Tracherous Lupo!" The guards still held de Sevrac, whose eyes were almost petrified with horror! Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere looked aghast and pale, while the life blood streamed on the marble pavement from the bosom of Monsieur de Briancour.

At this moment St. Clair entered the vestibule. He was the image of death! "Oh! my friend!" said he, embracing de Sevrac, "support me, I am poisoned."

The Marquis's arms being held, he had not power to render him any assistance, and he fell; at this moment Rosine whispered to St. Clair, "Promise to spare me, and I will save de Sevrac."—he promised.

At day break, the breathless remains of Monsieur de Briancour were conveyed into the saloon; the Marquis, with Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere, to prison; and St. Clair to his lodgings. A physician was sent for, and the effects of the poison soon counteracted; the flask having stood

stood for some time unshaken, the most pernicious particles of the drug which Rosine had infused, were not dissolved; had she poured out the draught, it would have proved fatal.

In a few hours the parties were confronted, and the instrument of death produced; it was the poniard which had belonged to de Sevrac's father. "Ha!" exclaimed the Marquis, "then Ravillon is the assassin!"

"Ravillon is not the murderer of Monsieur de Briancour," said Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere, he fell by the hand of Signor Lupo."

A new link to the long chain of mysteries now presented itself: every mind was filled with consternation. St. Clair's having been nearly involved in the dreadful scene of destruction, convinced every person present, that the plot originated with Rosine and her party. Her declaration fully exonerated Monsieur de Sevrac; and the notoriety of Signor Lupo's attachment to Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere, tended powerfully to authenticate her accusation. An officer of the police, who was dispatched to apprehend the avvocato, soon brought intelligence that he had fled to Cortona.

St. Clair, however he abhorred the infamy of Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere, had still avoided accusing her of having administered the poison. She was detained as a confederate of Signor Lupo's, but was promised a mitigation of punishment, on condition that she would deliver up every accomplice, and produce such evidence as should convict the assassin. St. Clair's ill-placed lenity was unnecessary; Rosine was delivered to the custody of the jailor Giacomo; and her means of gratifying his avarice could not fail to procure her escape.



The Marquis, St. Clair, and four police officers, instantly set out for Cortona ; while Monsieur Lemoine and Marianna hastened to communicate all that had passed to Madame de Sevrac and her daughter : their surprise was only to be equalled by the horror which such a combination of villany excited. They repaired immediately to Florence, where they waited at Marianna's lodgings for the Marquis's return. An universal consternation prevailed throughout the city ; Monsieur de Briancour's death was the source of various sensations. Signor Lupo had many friends in the higher circles, and Mademoiselle Rosine many lovers : opinions were divided, conjectures formed, but no person seconded de Sevrac's suspicions, because Monsieur Ravillon had not been seen during several weeks at Florence.

The hours passed slowly, and every moment was replete with solicitude while Madame de Sevrac and Sabina waited impatiently for news from Cortona.

## C H A P. XV.

"What equal torment to that griefe of minde  
 "And pyning anguish hid in gentle heart,  
 "That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkinde,  
 "And nourisheth her own consuming smart?"

SPENSER.

AFTER a journey of the utmost expedition, the Marquis and St. Clair arrived at Cortona: on entering the town, they quitted their carriage, and proceeded on foot towards the chateau of Monsieur de Briancour. They fastened the gates as soon as they were admitted, secured the domestics, and immediately examined every apartment. But no Signor Lupo was to be found; there were only four servants at the chateau, who declared unanimously, that he had not been there during the last three weeks. The news of Monsieur de Briancour's death had not reached Cortona, and the Marquis agreed with St. Clair that it would be imprudent to divulge it, till they had obtained further information from the neighbourhood and the domestics.

The officers of the police were dispersed in the vicinity of the chateau, while de Sevrac and St. Clair remained to guard the outward gates. After the most minute inquiry, the out-

posts returned unsuccessful ; and the Marquis proposed that two should go back to Florence, and the other two remain that night with him and St. Clair at the chateau. As day closed they departed. The domestics brought every thing that was called for ; a splendid supper ; the purest wines ; and the best chambers were arranged for the guests, who were both known to the family ; St. Clair, since his residence in Tuscany, and the Marquis before he quitted Paris.

Notwithstanding the alacrity with which every attention was performed, de Sevrac remarked a trepidation among the domestics, which convinced him that all was not right. Yet, as he found by their enquiries after their master, that his death was unknown to them, he was convinced that they could have no motive for concealing the assassin Lupo, and was therefore at a loss to account for the singularity of their manner. The Marquis chose to sup in an apartment which opened to the court in the front of the chateau. The doors were of glass, and their table was placed so as to command an uninterrupted view of the outward gates, where in the porter's lodge they had stationed the officers of the police.

Among the domestics who waited at supper, Monsieur de Sevrac observed one, extremely old and feeble, who attended to his commands with a mixture of melancholy and inquietude that awakened his curiosity. His hand shook with more than the infirmity of age, and his eyes were full of tears whenever they met those of the Marquis. The supper was removed, a luxurious desert was placed

placed on the table, and the servants retired.

"St. Clair," said Monsieur de Sevrac, "we must be vigilant. Did you observe the old white-haired man? how earnestly he seems to interest himself in something which appertains to our adventure." After a short consultation, they agreed to send for him. They did, and he instantly obeyed the summons.

"Do you know me, friend?" inquired de Sevrac.

"I remember you a boy," answered the old man.

"Who am I?"

After some hesitation, the venerable domestic replied, "I think you are the Marquis de Sevrac."

"Have you been long in the service of Monsieur de Briancour?"

"Just nineteen years," answered he, "I have always resided at the chateau in Gascony."

"In Gascony!" cried de Sevrac with emotion. "You knew Madame de Briancour?"

"I did; she was a persecuted angel!" said Enflache, bursting into tears.

The Marquis's heart throbbed with sympathy.

"If I dared tell all that I know," cried the old man, looking round with caution, "I would discover——"

"What? speak; for I am eager to hear thee," said the Marquis.

"I owe more than my life to Monsieur de



de Briancour," continued Eustache, "and yet"—

"Fear nothing," interrupted St. Clair, "Monsieur de Sevrac will reward thee handsomely."

"I want no reward," replied Eustache, "I only wish to be secure from the Count's revenge; for I should not like after seventy years of chequered sorrow, to have my white hairs stained with blood."

"Has thine been a life of sorrow?" cried de Sevrac, "poor old man! what has been thy trouble?"

"Ask me not," said he, "I have sworn to keep my sorrows secret."

"But the event which thou art inclined to discover," interrupted St. Clair.

Eustache was about to speak, when a loud knock at the door silenced him—he turned pale, and trembled. The Marquis rushed to open it, but no person was there.

"This is strange indeed!" cried de Sevrac; "do you know who knocked?"

Eustache clasped his hands, and raised his eyes towards heaven, but made no answer. St. Clair continued to question him.—"Reveal what you know, and we will defend you," said he.

The windows shook as though they were shattered to atoms: and Eustache darted out of the room, leaving the Marquis and St. Clair to form their own conjectures.

"What can this portend?" said de Sevrac. "We will not sleep to night, at any rate; whatever mischief comes, we will meet it with our eyes open." They demanded more wine,

wine, and it was brought by a sturdy fellow, who scowled at the Marquis as he left the room.

They sat at the table till past midnight; every thing was quiet in the Chateau. The servants had retired to rest, at the particular desire of Monsieur de Sevrac; the officers of justice had a portion of good wine sent to the lodge, where they kept guard, and they waited impatiently for the morning. Another hour passed, and all was still; solemnly, terribly still.

St. Clair had never experienced such sensations as those, which this awful hour excited. Their pistols lay on the table, several tapers were burning in all parts of the saloon; and yet, something of horror seemed to surround them. Not a breath of air was stirring; the night was warm, and the sky clear starlight: they walked round the court, and, as the clock struck two, they heard a deep and melancholy groan.

The guards rushed out of the lodge, and darting towards the Marquis, inquired, "Did you hear nothing?"

"We did," replied de Sevrac.

"A groan?"

"A deep and agonized groan!" answered St. Clair. As he spoke, a second, more distinct than the former, slowly vibrated towards them. They returned to the saloon leaving the glass doors wide open: they continued to listen for some time, but all was silent. Again they agreed to traverse the court; each took his pistol, and they walked several times round without uttering a syllable. The stars began

to recede, and the sky to assume a bluish cast. "It will soon be day," said the Marquis, "and we shall then discover from whence the groan proceeded."

They were on the threshold of the saloon, when a voice pronounced "Oh ! de Sevrac !"

"Speak, speak to me again," cried the Marquis eagerly, and looking about with astonishment. Again they made several turns round the court, but nothing more was heard.

"It is a trick to alarm us," said St. Clair, "believe me, it is nothing else."

"Oh, no !" replied the Marquis, "such a tone as that could never have been assumed. It was the agonized labour of the heart." Day advanced rapidly ; the rising sun cast a brilliant light on the slated roof of the chateau. Every window was closed ; not a foot was stirring. While Monsieur de Sevrac extinguished the tapers which glimmered in their sockets, and drew back the window curtains of the saloon, Eustache entered, "I am come to bid you farewell ;" said he, "our steward has ordered me to depart for Florence without delay."

"For what reason ?" cried St. Clair. The steward came hastily across the court, and Eustache had just time to say, "Madame de Briancour still lives," — before he reached the saloon.

"Eustache why are you not gone ?" said the steward sternly. The old man did not dare to remonstrate. He followed him to the gate where his horse was waiting, often looking

ing back, and, with his hands clasped, shaking his venerable head, as if he pitied those he left behind him. They saw him mount his horse and depart reluctantly from the chateau, the stern steward standing at the gate till he was out of sight.

The Marquis and St. Clair were now more strongly convinced than ever, that some strange event occasioned Eustache's chagrin. "Why is he removed?" cried de Sevrac. "What could produce such evident perturbation? I will not rest till I have explored every niche of this infernal dwelling, for, that something dreadful has been or will be perpetrated, is most certain."

Breakfast was served by the steward, and as soon as they had drunk their coffee, they again proceeded to examine the apartments. They passed along several chambers, all of which presented the most extravagant magnificence, till they came to a narrow dark gallery, at the end of which they entered a small room, that had wholly escaped observation on the preceding night. It was scantily furnished: a narrow bed and a table were its only decorations; the long windows were doubly secured with iron frame work, and rendered gloomy by a lofty wall, which was their opposite prospect.

The Marquis's feet were arrested by astonishment. "This is a chamber contrived for some damned purpose!" said he, as he glanced round it with horror: "it was from this grated window that the groans proceeded."

"It



"It seems very probable," replied St. Clair.

"Probable! It is certain," cried de Sevrac: "and yet I know not how it escaped your eyes, when we explored the chateau." They returned into the gallery, and closed the door, which only appeared like a pannel in an old wainscot. Again they entered the chamber. The bed had been evidently occupied the preceding night: the cloaths were tumbled, and the pillow still humid with tears. The Marquis pressed it to his lips. "Unfortunate Madame de Briancour!" said he, with a sigh, "I fear this was thy resting place." The flame of a small lamp was just expiring on the hearth; and on examining the windows, they could perceive a side view of one corner of the court which faced the chateau.

"Let us take no notice of our discovery," said St. Clair. "This night we will sit up again, and I think that all will be developed. If we give the alarm, the object of our curiosity will be removed, and we shall never know who is the unfortunate prisoner."

"It is Madame de Briancour," cried the Marquis. "There cannot remain a doubt of it." Every vein of de Sevrac's heart throbbed at the idea: they descended to the saloon, wrote letters, and dispatched one of the officers of the police to Florence with them; resolving to pass one night more in the chateau.

The day crept slowly on; the domestics continued to serve them with every luxury that the country afforded: the steward again inquired whether Monsieur de Briancour was expected;

expected; to which question he received no answer. He had a double motive in sending Eustache to Florence; the first to carry a letter for his master, intending to inform him of what had passed at the chateau; and the second, to prevent his making discoveries which were to be apprehended from the candour and humanity of his nature.

At dinner the Marquis could not resist questioning the morose steward: he knew that if he was cruel, he was also a coward; qualities which generally associate in the human heart: that he was a confederate in some villainy was evident, by his sullen trepidation; and that he feared punishment was equally certain, by the precautions he adopted to evade a discovery. De Sevrac entered into a conversation on a variety of subjects, and at last took an opportunity to mention Madame de Briancour.

"She was a charming woman!" said the Marquis.

"She died in Gascony," answered the steward, briefly.

"Are you certain that she died?" said St. Clair.

"I did not see her expire, but that she is dead cannot be doubted," answered the servant.

"Why not?" cried de Sevrac. "Suppose that she still lives."

The steward started, and looked strangely.

"Had you such intelligence from old Eustache?" cried he.

"Why

"Why from him?"

"Because," answered the domestic, "he had the care of her in Gascony."

"The care of Madame de Briancour!" repeated the Marquis: "I do not comprehend you."

"Why she was locked up in an old chateau in a small room——"

"With grated windows?" cried de Sevrac.

"Yes, with grated windows," replied the steward, with evident confusion.

"I have seen such a chamber," said St. Clair, still watching his countenance, which changed every moment, till he took an opportunity to leave the saloon.

"Yes! By Heavens!" exclaimed the Marquis, "Madame de Briancour is the prisoner: this fellow confesses that Eustache had the care of her, and he declared that she was still living; released from the shackles of her tyrant, she may yet be happy."

Time became insupportably tedious; de Sevrac and St. Clair frequently visited the different apartments, but they constantly observed that the steward watched them. The library afforded food for the mind; but their minds were already overcharged with thinking. They conversed incessantly on their concerted enterprize, and each pledged himself to the other, that no human power should make them relinquish it.

Evening advanced, and the sun's last rays faded from the horizon, while the Marquis and his friend walked to and fro on a terrace at the back of the chateau. Every moment seemed

seemed an hour, and every hour promised the approach of that which should bring forth events of the most important nature. De Sevrac told the story of Madame de Briancour's marriage, and expressed his surprize that he had never heard from Monsieur D'Albert, since the report of her death. St. Clair was sensibly penetrated by the melancholy tale, and again promised to unite with de Sevrac in restoring her to society.

During their promenade, the Marquis often sighed deeply. His manner was more than commonly unquiet: he frequently endeavoured to conceal tears that gushed from his eyes, in spite of all that he could do to suppress them. St. Clair remarked his evident distress, and endeavoured to rouse him from his melancholy humour; but the recollection of Madame de Briancour's sorrows awakened pangs which were ever alive, and only supplanted at times by the acute sensation of more recent misfortunes.

"Alas! St. Clair," said the Marquis, stopping abruptly, "I have a weighty load upon my mind, which, during my prosperous days, lay dormant: a series of punishments (for I can call my sorrows by no other name) have awakened me to remorse, and convinced me that my grief is hopeless. Luxury and prosperity benumb the faculties of thought, but when adversity pinches the torpid heart, sensation returns with accumulated torture; while truth holds up a tablet of past events, which, reflected on the brain, becomes indelible.

"I was born and nursed in splendour; I came into society a sophisticated being; every thing,



thing, like nature, was perverted, by that pernicious distorter of the human heart, called custom. I knew only the path that led to pleasure; the rugged road to fame was tedious, and I considered ease as the first step towards perfect happiness. Can it be a matter of surprise, that a journey so commenced should end in sorrow?"

"You consider your misfortunes as individual punishments," replied St. Clair, "while you forget that thousands are, like yourself, involved in ruin."

"To render millions happy," interrupted de Sevrac, "ought I then to repine?"

It was a delicate question, which St. Clair could not answer without wounding the sensibility of the Marquis.

"And yet," continued he, "the miseries of one have caused my heart to suffer pangs that almost overbalance the recollection that millions are wretched from oppression." He paused, and walked hastily along the terrace: his heart was torn with contending agonies. St. Clair entreated him to drop the subject, and to prepare his mind for the momentous period which was now rapidly advancing.

"St. Clair," cried Monsieur de Sevrac, "you are right; this is no time for a melancholy retrospect. The fate of Madame de Briancour depends on our success; for, if we do not find her, I shall conclude that she has been removed by some private means from the chateau, and we shall never have such another opportunity. This night shall be devoted

to the cause of Madame de Briancour ; and, if I survive it, I will soon deposit the fatal secret in your bosom."

The Marquis and St. Clair immediately after entered the chateau ; supper was served, and they waited impatiently for the approach of midnight.

## C H A P. XVI.

"And now loud howling wolves arouse the jades  
 "That drag the tragic melancholy night;  
 "Who, with their drowsy, slow, and flagging wings,  
 "Clip dead men's graves; and from their misty jaws  
 "Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE silent hour, which superstition dedicates to fear, but which the calm and undisturbed mind devotes to rest or meditation, at length arrived: it succeeded a day of perpetual inquietude, and menaced a night of horrible importance. The chateau was not correctly intitled to that name: it displayed no antique towers, no strong portcullis, no battlements over-screening the deep moat, or backing the encircling rampart. It was a large and gloomy mansion, whose lofty roof was covered with grey slate, and whose long windows, composed of small panes of glass, commanded a square court in front; while the back of the building overlooked a terrace and a garden, vast but melancholy; owing to its avenues being bordered by alternate deformities, of yew and sculpture.

An

An iron gate, of fantastic workmanship, closed the front entrance to a dark and venerable forest ; and its creaking hinges were attached to pillars of gray stone, on which were placed, as a part of the family arms of the original owner, two dragons of black marble, which seemed the guardian monsters of an infernal habitation.

Monfieur de Sevrac and St. Clair, as soon as they had made an hasty supper, began to traverse the court, in hopes that the sound of their footsteps would rouse the concealed sufferer. The sky was illumined with those coruscations of light which commonly succeed a sultry day in the southern climates : every undulating ray that flashed across the hemisphere seemed to lend an awful sublimity to the time, and, as if by portentous signs, to indicate approaching horrors.

The officer of the police seated himself at the door of the porter's lodge which was built near the iron gates : he was armed, and only waited for a signal to join the Marquis and St. Clair in the enterprize which was meditated. The wary steward was that night on his guard : the questions of the preceding day had awakened his vigilance, and he watched them from his chamber window incessantly. The blaze of tapers burning in the saloon only served to render the court more obscure and lonesome ; while the lofty trees of the forest gently moved with a whispering sound, which augmented and decreased with every breath of air that passed over the chateau.

They continued to walk more than an hour, but no voice was heard, not a footstep was stirring except their own, which echoed doubly loud, from the stillness of every thing around them. "I have been in many awful situations,"  
said



said Monsieur de Sevrac, "but I do not remember one so appalling to the senses as this which now presents itself. If I could believe it possible that graves could again cast forth their cold and silent tenants, I should think that the restless spectre would chuse this chateau for its midnight wanderings. How melancholy is this spacious building! its walls blackened by time, and its slated roof blending with the dusky colour of the sky."

"It was not always so solitary," said the guard, who heard their conversation as he was sitting near the gate: "there was a time when feasting and merriment rung through every chamber, when shouts of revelry echoed to the mountain of Cortona, for then it had a generous master: it belonged to the Count Monteleoni."

"What Monteleoni?" inquired de Sevrac, hastily.

"Why, the count, whose daughter has been forced away from him," replied the guard. "Great rewards have been offered, but nobody can tell what is become of her."

"And how came Monsieur de Briancour to get this chateau?" said the Marquis.

"By the cast of a die," answered the officer of the police. "He won it at a gaming table."

"Unfortunate Monteleoni!" cried de Sevrac. "There lies thy own failing! it was by that fatal propensity that thy beautiful daughter was so nearly sacrificed to Monsieur Ravillon."

"True," interrupted the guard; "and that same Ravillon has lately seized on all his property at Florence. They say that he possesses as much treasure as our lady of Loretto."

"Indeed?" cried the Marquis, earnestly.

"In

"In faith does he ; and he may do as much mischief as he will, for his soul will have a powerful advocate. After his son, his next heir is the rich abbot of a convent near Monte Carrelli."

"The Abbot Palerma?"

"Yes," replied the guard, "that is the name ; I know it again, now I hear it."

"How came the Abbot by his riches?" inquired the Marquis.

"That is more than I can tell," answered the guard : "he has the power to perform miracles, they say ; and his wealth would almost make one credit the idea. He was the élève of the Cardinal Benoni ; who, as report says, died suddenly !—You comprehend me?"

"I do," replied Monsieur de Sevrac ; "but how is he the heir of Ravillon, in case of his son's decease?"

"Because his sister was the wife of Ravillon. The Abbot, when they were married, was only a poor monk, of the order of Saint Benedict, and, indeed, remained no higher till the death of the old Cardinal."

This intelligence awakened a new source of elucidation : the Marquis now discovered that Palerma's motive for wishing to accomplish the marriage between Arnaud and Mademoiselle de Sevrac, was the chance of enriching himself, in case he should survive them. After a pause of a few minutes, the Marquis's thoughts again returned to the Count Monteleoni. "And do you know the sum for which this Ravillon has seized the effects of the venerable Count?"

"No less than twenty thousand zechins," replied the guard.

De

De Sevrac instantly recollected that it was the precise sum which would have been cancelled by Ravillon's marriage with Paulina. "Alas! St. Clair," cried the Marquis, "I am, in fact, the cause of Monteleoni's distresses! Yet, even amidst the ruin that surrounded him, ruin, to which I was accessory, he could think of my embarrassments—" At this moment a piercing shriek issued from the chateau.

"Follow me!" cried de Sevrac, darting through the saloon, and proceeding up the stairs towards the grated apartment.

They demanded admittance, but no one answered: they listened, and all was still. The door was forced open; no person was there, but on the table lay a small filetto. The Marquis and St. Clair looked at each other with horror; a chain lay across the bed, and the pillow was again humid with tears.

"By Heavens!" exclaimed de Sevrac, "this dreadful business shall be unravelled! Some black and barbarous deed is meditated, and it will be both cowardice and inhumanity to relinquish the investigation."

As he spoke, the morose steward entered the room. They instantly seized him; and the officer of the police presenting a pistol to his head, commanded him, on pain of death, to conceal the mystery no longer. "We are determined to know from whence the groans, which we have heard at different periods, proceeded," said St. Clair; "therefore be explicit, or prepare to meet that fate which your barbarity so justly merits."

For some time the steward remained obstinately silent; till, terrified by the menaces of St. Clair,

Clair, and the pistol of the guard, he made them a signal to follow him.

By a violent effort, the grated window was opened, and he stepped into a long balcony, at the east end of the building; from thence he entered a narrow door that led to a dark winding staircase, which had no communication with any of the apartments of the chateau, except one on the attic story, which, being situated in the slanting roof, was little more than a loft, with one small window, cheerless and solitary.

"Whither wilt thou lead us?" cried the Marquis. The steward made no answer, but continued to ascend; Monsieur de Sevrac followed him close, carrying a light; St. Clair was the second, and the officer of the police the last, all armed, and firm in resolution.

Thus they proceeded till they came to the attic story, where they stopped, and listened: they heard a noise, like two persons struggling, in a room which faced the top of the staircase. The Marquis could no longer restrain his impatience; he rushed before the steward, who was pale and trembling, and, bursting open the door, entered the apartment, where his blood almost congealed with horror, when he beheld the frantic daughter of Monteleoni, forcibly confined in the arms of Jaquillina Dufanga.

The persecuting hag grinned with malicious triumph, while her bony fingers grasped the beautiful form of the exhausted prisoner. De Sevrac sprang towards her, and snatching Paulina to his bosom, exclaimed, "For me! Oh, God! is it for me that you suffer this agony?" He could say no more; his strength forsook him.

St.



St. Clair supported the maniac, while the Marquis threw himself on the ground, overwhelmed and distracted.

Jaquilina gnashed her teeth, clenched her meagre hands, and, by her distorted gestures, menaced the afflicted Marquis.

St. Clair, who had never seen Paulina in the lustre of her beauty, and supposing that it was Madame de Briancour whom he then beheld, was at a loss to comprehend the meaning of de Sevrac's words; while his heart was agonized by sympathy and pity. She was pale, and emaciated almost to a shadow; a simple covering of white drapery enfolded her fine form; and her jet black hair was bound with a faded band of flowers, which looked like the emblems of herself, drooping and neglected.

She knelt by the side of de Sevrac, and taking the garland from her own head, placed it upon his; then suddenly snatching it away, "I here, now you will be well!" cried she, "and you will laugh as I do." A transient smile stole over her countenance, but it instantly changed to a look of horror, while she dropped her wreath upon the ground, and sighed deeply.

The Marquis started up and fixed his eyes on Paulina, with an expression of sorrow that bespoke the anguish of his mind. Again she took the faded garland from the floor, and endeavoured to hide it with a part of her drapery that hung round her, then looking towards the little casement, through which the day began to brighten, she exclaimed, "Ah! no matter! The sun will shine, and I shall have fresh flowers, all covered with dew, and smelling sweeter than these poor blossoms!" Again she sighed, while her

her thoughts seemed wandering to a new object.

"I cannot bear this sight," cried the Marquis. — "I shall soon be as frantic as she is. Oh! heavens! what are all other scenes of human misery compared with this?" As he spoke, Paulina seemed to listen, but her attention ceased with his words, and again her eyes wandered round the apartment. As soon as they met those of Jaquilina, she shrunk almost to the floor. "What have I done?" cried she, plaintively, "I said my prayers, and you only mocked me."

De Sevrac knelt before her with his hands clasped, and his eyes almost starting from their lids with horror. On one side of the room stood a small couch of woven cane, which was its only furniture. Several pieces of cord lay on it, St. Clair touched one of them, and Paulina shuddered, "Do not fasten my hands any more," said she, "I will make my garland quietly, and talk no more about him. Oh! De Sevrac!"

The Marquis looked wildly at St. Clair, but he had not power to speak; the energies of his soul were nearly subdued by agonizing conflicts, when they were again roused by the voice of Jaquilina.

"Will you begone?" cried she, "perish your meddling heart! what business have you here?"

"Peace!" exclaimed the Marquis, "and let me hear the voice of an angel once more." Paulina directed her eyes towards heaven and listened; her hand being raised, while her finger pointed to the sky, the loose drapery fell back upon her arm, where evident marks of violence discovered how callous the human heart can be, even to the last scene of mortal misery.

"Thou shalt suffer death for this," cried de Sevrac, addressing Jaquilina.

"Not on the scaffold!" said Paulina hastily. — The source of all her anguish faintly glanced across her mind at that moment; the Marquis pressed her to his bosom. — "Oh! victim of sensibility!" exclaimed he, "awake to reason, and behold the unfortunate de Sevrac!"

Paulina, as if electrified by these words, shivered! while the powers of sensation forsook her, and one lucid moment seemed to terminate all her sufferings. The Marquis bore her to the couch; she scarcely breathed; the faint tint which had over-spread her lip, as if to mock the death-like paleness of her cheek, now appeared no longer, and de Sevrac was almost frantic.

"You have murdered her," said Jaquilina with a ghastly smile, "and, thank God! I shall be revenged on thee, cursed de Sevrac! were it not for master's sake, these hands should tear thy heart to atoms." The Marquis snatched his pistol from the floor, when a deep groan, which proceeded from Paulina's bosom, arrested his hand, and saved the life of Jaquilina.

In a few minutes Paulina seemed to revive, she looked earnestly at de Sevrac, and began to weep a torrent of tears; she appeared to know him, and to feel her own unhappy situation; and again relapsed into her former derangement. She stretched forth her arm, and pointed to the cords, when the Marquis, for the first time, observed a wedding ring on her finger. "Merciful God!" exclaimed he, "what does this mean? art thou married, Paulina? Has villainy compelled thee to an act, which thy calm reason would have shuddered at?"

Jaquilina laughed, horribly,

"To

"To whom is she united?" continued the Marquis.

"To my brave master, Monsieur Ravillon," replied Jaquiline with exulting cruelty; "I saw them married." She quitted the apartment, muttering curses.

"It is too true," said the steward, as soon as she was gone, "the ceremony was performed some time ago, and Monsieur Ravillon has never seen her since."

"Who could sanction such an inhuman sacrifice?" cried de Sevrac.

"They were married by the Abbot Palermo, at his convent," replied the steward, "soon after Monsieur Ravillon stole her from her father's villa near Fontebuona: she has been here a prisoner ever since. But I am bound to secrecy, and if it is known that I discovered the matter, the vengeance of Monsieur de Briancour will be terrible."

"What interest could de Briancour have in this horrible transaction?" cried St. Clair.

"His hatred of the Count Monteleoni, and a mutual promise, sworn between him and Ravillon, to assist each other," answered the steward.

"I do not comprehend you," said the Marquis. — "What plan had they concerted, that required so singular an oath?"

"The ruin of your daughter," replied the steward, "Whom Monsieur de Briancour was determined to possess, and who was rescued from Ravillon by the Count Monteleoni. De Sevrac was almost annihilated with horror."

"How knew you this?" cried the Marquis.

"Promise to pardon me, and I will tell you all," answered the steward.



"I will," said de Sevrac, after a short pause: the domestic continued—

"I was one of those, who accompanied Monsieur Ravillon and Signor Lupo, on that dreadful night, when the former was wounded: he has been ever since confined to his chamber till within these few days; and at one time was in the most extreme danger."

"We will think of those matters hereafter," said the Marquis, "our first employment shall be to remove Signora Paulina from this infernal scene of persecution." As he spoke, Jaquissima entered the apartment.

"At your peril be it then," said she: "to-night Monsieur Ravillon will be here, and your life shall answer for it; I long to see his poniard red with your blood!"

"Horrible and sanguinary wretch!" interrupted St. Clair, "what has the Marquis done to make you utter such a damned wish?"

"He knows! he knows!" muttered the revengeful hag, pointing at de Sevrac with a malicious smile.

"By all that is sacred," cried the Marquis, "I do not comprehend her meaning; I never injured her."

"They now led Signora Paulina from the melancholy apartment; she descended the stairs fearful and trembling. When they came to the balcony, she turned towards the grated chamber, and patiently entered. Long accustomed to pass her days there, the place had become natural to her, and she was unconscious that it was her prison no longer, while the meek submission which every feature displayed, drew involuntary tears from her companions. She seated herself on her bed, and, placing

placing her little garland on the pillow, seemed insensible to all observation, till Monsieur de Sevrac took her hand and led her from the chamber.

"St. Clair," said the Marquis as soon as they entered the saloon, "to your protection will I consign this wreck of loveliness; you shall convey her safely to Madame de Sevrac, with whom she shall remain, till we can find the Count Monteleoni. For my own part, I am determined to wait here for the arrival of Monsieur Ravillon. To suffer such a monster to escape, would be to countenance his villany; the hour is rapidly approaching when one of us must fall; and I submit the justice of my cause to the interposition of heaven. Oh, Paulina!" continued de Sevrac, taking her listless hand, and pressing it to his lips with pure and tender pity, "thy injuries shall be avenged. Thy sorrows, for which I have been undesignedly accessory, shall be lightened, as much as human power can lighten them; and if to snatch thee from thy tyrant can alleviate thy pangs, I will accomplish that task at least, or perish."

They had not been many minutes in the saloon, when they were alarmed by a ringing at the outward gate, where a horseman waited.—The Marquis flew to open it; the messenger brought a letter for Jaquilina; de Sevrac took it eagerly, and summoning her instantly, compelled her to break the seal. She snatched the letter and tore it asunder; the Marquis gathered up the fragments and read their following contents:

"I am obliged to depart for Naples: mind that you watch Paulina, and remember the rich reward which you are promised, whenever her death shall terminate your labour. I suspect

"Some treachery: be vigilant, and you shall  
 "soon be revenged on the villain de Sevrac.  
 "I will find a safe retreat for you and for my  
 "wife, among the mountains of Sicily, from  
 "whence you shall shortly hear of me again."

### "RAVILLON."

Mr Clair instantly hastened to Cortona for his  
 carriage. The horseman who had brought the  
 letter for Jaquiline, had taken advantage of the  
 general consternation and escaped. The police  
 officer guarded the domestics at the chateau, and  
 Monsieur de Sevrac was left alone with Signora  
 Paulina. She talked incoherently; smiled, wept,  
 and sang by turns, rapidly quitting one subject  
 for another. The Marquis watched her with  
 such pure and sacred zeal that at times he at-  
 tracted her attention, but the glances of her dark  
 and penetrating eyes were momentary, while his  
 anguish was lasting and unutterable.

## CHAP. XVII.

- "Celestial happiness, where'er she stoops  
 "To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,  
 "And one alone, to make her sweet amends  
 "For absent heav'n—the bosom of a friend.

YOUNG.

BEFORE noon, the Marquis and St. Clair set out with Signora Paulina for Florence; though all the finer powers of intellect seemed lost, she appeared to be less agitated than she had been at the chateau. Her eyes were no longer wild, but pensive; the soft morning breezes which continually passed through the carriage refreshed her, and she looked round on every prospect, without that vacancy of countenance which had been so dreadful to contemplate.

As soon as they arrived at Florence, Monsieur de Sevrac proceeded to the lodgings of Marianna, where his wife and daughter waited to receive him. He observed a vast change in the manners of the amiable fugitive; she was lively even to a degree that indicated extreme happiness; a convenient and handsome house had been hired by Gaston; and, on the return of the Marquis, they all repaired thither: Madame de Sevrac and Sabina were extremely penetrated when they beheld



the beautiful Paulina, whose melancholy story awakened their sympathy. Every circumstance was related, except that which was the origin of her derangement, but the Marquis dreaded to communicate an event to his wife, which could not fail to agonize her feelings. The Abbe Le Blanc was dispatched to seek an habitation for his companions; and to make inquiries concerning the Count Monteleoni; while Madame de Sevrac, Sabina, and Marianna, were occupied in attentions to Signora Paulina.

The Marquis being left alone with Gaston, after a silence of several minutes, which was marked by strong emotions of impatience and apprehension, "Monsieur de Sevrac," said he, "my good fortune brings with it one gratification which will surpass all the raptures that the world is capable of bestowing; it enables me to render you some service; and I shall think the bounty of heaven bestowed in vain, if you will not condescend to share it with me." De Sevrac listened attentively, no less astonished by the words, than by the energetic manner of Lemoine.

"What right have I, who am a stranger, to expect such kindness?" said the Marquis, "I cannot, indeed I cannot augment my obligations: they will overpower my feelings, and I shall not be able to support them. I have already too many trials to encounter; urge me not to that, which will render me unjust, as well as unfortunate.

"Who has so much right to command my property, as he who preserved my life?" replied Lemoine; de Sevrac interrupted him. "If by my visit at Bologna I was in any degree instrumental

mental to your recovery, I am repaid, a thousand times repaid, in seeing you now happy. Poor and torpid must that heart be, which exercises a speculative humanity, and looks forward to a return, beyond its own immediate sensations.

"You not only afforded me life, but the means to preserve it," said Lemoine.

"It was a debt of honour, and you have repaid me," answered de Sevrac.

"If you did but know me" —

"I do know you," interrupted the Marquis,

"I have proved your heart; it is rich in all the graces of philanthropy!" Gaston continued —

"And yet you refuse me an opportunity of doing that which is my duty and my pride: is it because you would check my presumption; or that you think me unworthy of your friendship? From what does this unkindness, this contempt proceed?" Lemoine was so much agitated, that he could not utter another syllable for several minutes: he placed his hand before his eyes to hide the sensibility of his heart.

"We will talk of this matter some other day," said the Marquis, endeavouring to quit the room. Gaston flew after him and holding his arm, exclaimed, "By heavens, if you are determined to be unfriendly, you shall not compel me to be dishonest; I owe you an hundred louis d'ors; there at least you must suffer me to pay you."

"Monsieur Lemoine," replied the Marquis gravely, "this is trifling with my adversity. You owe me nothing. I never beheld you till the hour when I visited your chamber at Bo-

logna. If there be any thing in my history that excites your compassion, do not display it, by sharpening my sense of sorrow. I can bear poverty, but I cannot yield to pity." Gaston was silent, and de Sevrac, after taking a turn round the room, continued; "Your mind is noble, and my friendship shall be your's. But you will not be able to convince me, that a person whom you never beheld, except in a moment of delirium, can have claims so strong, as to command your fortune."

"You are deceived," replied Lemoine, "if you suppose that I am a stranger to you."

"Where did you ever see me?"

"At Milan."

"Indeed I, in what situation?"

"Question me no farther," said Gaston, "I conjure you not to agonize my heart. I saw you."

"Perhaps upon the scaffold?" interrupted de Sevrac, with a faltering voice.

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Lemoine.

"Could I behold the Marquis de Sevrac on a scaffold, and live to tell it?"

"As I entered the prison with the officers of justice?"

"Even so," answered Gaston with a sigh. The Marquis was extremely confused and agitated; he looked earnestly at Lemoine, and wiping a tear from his cheek, replied, "It was but a barbarous curiosity. What motive could a feeling bosom have, for contemplating the victim of persecution?"

"To save that victim."

"How?"

"By the hour when I visited your chamber at St. Louis."

"By flight. One of the jailors, a brave and generous soul, by chance lodged in the same house with me: I knew him when he was a boy. His father, who was born in France, but having married an Italian resided at Milan, or was, for some trifling offence against the state, sentenced to endure seven years imprisonment. The Marquis shuddered.

"Horrible decree! go on." Gaston continued.

"His son, Justin Latour, who was in the regiment D'Auvergne, as soon as he heard of his parent's fate, obtained leave of absence, and instantly hastened to Milan. He arrived just in time to see his mother die with grief, and in vain implored an interview with his father. After having tried every expedient without success, he determined on an enterprise which might not only bring him to a sight of the prisoner, but procure his escape. He hired himself in the service of the keeper of the prison, and, having been educated in Normandy, where he married a girl of good family, was wholly unknown to his new masters. By this stratagem he daily saw and conversed with his parent, whom, at the end of three months, he contrived to liberate. For prudential motives he continued to exercise his painful occupation, till some safe moment should arrive, when he might remove without creating suspicion. He had often heard him say, that he could effect your emancipation, provided he had a resolute companion who would assist in the undertaking. Oh! de Sevrac! my heart bounded at the idea. I swore to be his confederate, and we arranged



our plans, as we thought with the certainty of success." The Marquis was earnestly attentive.

"Justin promised to set your wife and daughter free, and afterwards to aid me in securing the ferocious jailor who guarded your dungeon. I waited impatiently for his signal, till tortured by solicitude and urged on by hope, I mounted the wall which commanded the outward gate: the centinel saw me, and discharged his musket full at my breast."

"With difficulty I reached my lodging, where I found Latour also wounded, he, having failed in his part of the enterprize. The carriage which I had prepared for you, conveyed me immediately to Bologna, where the ball was extracted, but I was in a short time reduced to the most extreme dangers: it was at this period that Marianna met you. Three weeks after, I received a letter from Justin, to inform me, that he had escaped, was perfectly recovered, and had joined his regiment at Valenciennes."

The Marquis listened to this brief narrative with a mixture of gratitude and astonishment: while the frequent interruptions which Lemoine's extreme sensibility occasioned, rendered every word he uttered doubly interesting. As he concluded, Marianna entered the room; she brought the consoling intelligence that Signor Ravenna slept; and the party waited with impatience for the return of St. Clair and the Abbe Le Bland. The Marquis was more anxious than ever to develop the cause of Lemoine's attachment, and resolved on the first opportunity that should present itself, to question him further on the subject.

In

In the course of the evening, St. Clair communicated two important discoveries. The first was, that Mademoiselle D'Orvilliere had escaped from the prison; and the second, that the Count Monteleoni resided at the house of a friend and relation, on the borders of the lake of Perugia. Paulina continued tranquil, and the night passed with increasing hopes of amendment.

Before noon, on the following day, the Marquis, with Sabina, Signora Paulina, and St. Clair, departed for the lake. Madame de Sevrag, who waited anxiously for letters from England, and the Abbe, remained with Marianna. The purpose of their journey was to restore the lovely invalid to her afflicted father, whose pecuniary derangements would not admit of his visiting Florence. The Marquis promised to return in a few days, and they separated with a thousand affectionate wishes on all sides.

The route was beautifully diversified and richly romantic;—vast plains, woody amphitheatres, and mountains covered with vines and olives, perpetually exhibited the luxuriance of the soil, and excited the admiration of the travellers. Paulina appeared sometimes to contemplate the changes of scenery, with a smile of intellectual satisfaction, which contributed much to the pleasure of the party, and nothing but her derangement could have rendered the journey less than enchanting.

Nothing material occurred till they reached Perugia. It was near evening when they approached the lake, which presented a view at once tranquil and sublime. They descended to the valley, through a dark and gradually sloping vista of forest trees, in full and interwoven foliage.

liage. Several cottages of Italian architecture varied the prospects, which opened suddenly from different points of the road, some covered with vines, others with myrtle, many beautiful, and all infinitely picturesque. The sky was glowing and unclouded; and the sun just sinking below the horizon, when the lake of Perugia burst upon their view: it appeared like a vast sheet of gold, scarcely ruffled by the lightest breezes from the south, and bordered by plantations of oak and cypress, the village of Passignano, the road leading to Torricella, and a small but beautiful structure which was the asylum of Monteleone.

The day had been particularly sultry, and the soft wind, which blew at intervals from the apennines, made the approach of twilight doubly welcome. They proceeded along the margin of the lake, till they reached the villa del Marmo, the hospitable abode of Paulina's uncle, the Marquis Lambertini. The sensations which the venerable Monteleone experienced in embracing his darling child, rescued from the tyranny of a villain, almost overpowered him; while every observer participated in his rapture.

The villa del Marmo was more comfortable than splendid, being constructed with elegant simplicity, and fitted up with every thing that could render it a pleasing and desirable retreat. The sublime solitude of its situation was suited to the taste of its owner, who devoted his life to perpetual study. He had travelled fifteen years, and in his researches had explored all the varying productions of nature and of art; till, like a philosopher, wearied with the busy turmoil of life, he sought to repose.

of his wisdom and his love of the

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot!"

The evening passed in conversation. Monsieur de Serrac had a dark volume to unfold, every page of which wrung the heart of Monteleoni: but time was precious, and the party anxious to return to Florence. St. Clair and Sabina, who wished not to be present at the melancholy disclosure, strolled on the margin of the lake, to contemplate the surrounding scenery. As the west shut in, the effect of light and shadow was varied with every moment; the water, which had at sun-set presented such a glowing plain of liquid lustre, now assumed the sober grey which was reflected from a cool and temperate sky; while retiring day afforded just light sufficient to distinguish the most prominent features of nature.

Mademoiselle de Serrac and St. Clair continued to wander by the side of the lake till they could no longer perceive the villa del Marmo. It was then, for the first time, that she recollected her situation, in the most romantic solitude, with no companion but the lover of the profligate Rosine. Something like apprehension made her heart beat with a quickened circulation, and she turned suddenly, to re-tread the path which she had imperceptibly measured farther than prudence would have permitted, had reflection been her guide. St. Clair observed her alarm, and consoled her to fear nothing. "We have often wandered near Monte Carelli," said he, "and you never doubted the zeal, or the fidelity of my protection."

"My mind is strangely altered, since that tranquil period," replied Sabina.

"Your



"Your sentiments, you would say, Mademoiselle de Sevrac. I'm unworthy."

"Why do you think so?" cried Sabina, hastily.

"Because you cannot be unjust," answered St. Clair.

"Is there no other cause?"

He did not reply, and a silence of several minutes followed. Sabina wished to hear his exculpation; but St. Clair had not courage to begin a subject which must inevitably compel him to a disclosure of events at once important and painful.

They continued walking slowly; the evening was beautifully serene, and the wild notes of the nightingales echoed from brake to brake, along the forest. Mademoiselle de Sevrac's mind was harmonized by the tranquillity of the hour, and the delicious solitude which surrounded her; while St. Clair's breast throbbled with a thousand contending agonies. The degrading caprice which had made him the dupe of Rosine, had not diminished his affection for Sabina; it had been the delirium of the senses, not the conviction of reason: the passions had run wild, but they had not overpowered the sweet and imperishable blossoms of truth and sensibility.

St. Clair, who had long wished for a moment when he might unbosom all the secrets of his life to Mademoiselle de Sevrac, now that it presented itself, had not resolution to utter a syllable. He could meet the destructive glances of Rosine D'Orville, and plead the cause of a transient caprice without fear or embarrassment: but the object now before him was guarded.

guarded by something so sacred, that to name dishonourable love was impossible.—St. Clair was almost frantic; they came every moment nearer to the villa del Marmo, and he had suffered an opportunity to escape which he had long sought, and which, he feared, would never again present itself.

As they approached the house, Sabina altered her pace, and the last fifty yards were measured with slow and reluctant steps. “We shall leave Florence soon, St. Clair,” said Mademoiselle de Sevrac. He attempted to speak, but the Marquis and Monteleoni were walking on a terrace which faced the lake, and the conversation ceased for that evening.

The joy which the venerable Count felt in once more beholding his daughter, was greatly diminished, when he was informed of her marriage with Ravillon. Though he knew that she was compelled to an act while in a state of insanity, which would almost render its continuance desirable, he dreaded the consequences which would be attached to such a union: the only chance of releasing Signora Paulina from that chain which could not fail to overpower her, was to convict her husband of crimes for which he deserved the severest punishment of the laws. Yet the Count Monteleoni was fearful that proofs were still wanting, to crush him wholly; and he knew that to irritate a serpent, unless there is a chance of destroying him, is only to increase the danger which is to be apprehended from its venom.

Though Rosine had confessed that Signor Luppa was guilty, she had said nothing that could criminate Monsieur Ravillon: the only evidence against

against him was the steward at the chateau of Cortenay, who, having once been suborned as a confederate in the darkest conspiracy, could scarcely be depended on as a witness in the cause of insulted virtue. Ravillon had the command of wealth, and the sanction of the Abbot Palerma, two powerful auxiliaries, where the prejudice to encounter lay in the bosoms of the ignorant and the venal: their situation was perplexing; but de Sevrac was resolved to punish Monsieur Ravillon, or to fall the victim of his determined resentment.

On the following day, the Marquis, Sabina, and St. Clair, set out on their return to Florence. Paulina did not seem sensible of a separation which deeply affected Monsieur de Sevrac: she smiled, as she embraced them all, without any visible emotion; but the Marquis could scarcely refrain from tears, when she kissed his hand, and bade him "come again to-morrow." She stood on the terrace, as they entered their carriage: never did she appear more lovely, or more interesting, than at that moment. The day was uncommonly brilliant, and every thing seemed to present an exulting freshness, which, by contrast, rendered Paulina's situation doubly penetrating. De Sevrac fixed his eyes on her sweet and placid countenance, till the mules moved from the steps of the terrace, when he threw himself back in the corner of the carriage, and resigned his heart to the most agonizing sensibility.

They ascended the vista which led from a curve on the margin of the lake; and when they reached the summit of the acclivity, again, through an opening among the trees, they discovered

covered the villa del Marmó. De Serrac stopped the postillions, and could plainly distinguish the white drapery of Signora Paulina, as she still stood on the terrace with her father. —

"Farewell! beautiful maniac!" cried the Marquis; "perhaps I shall never see thee more: but here I swear, by that sweet form which appears like the phantom of thy former self, never to rest till I have punished thy remorseless tyrant, and rescued thee from his infernal bondage!" The mules proceeded, and they soon lost sight of the villa del Marmó.

No event of importance occurred till they reached Florence, where the Marquis found letters from Madame de Serrac's relations, acquainting her that Lady Susan Montrose, by her mother's physicians, had quitted England, and was then on her route towards Italy. Madame de Serrac, who had not seen her mother since the period that she was married to the Marquis, was sensibly affected by this startling intelligence. Lady Susan was nearly seven years of age, and during her absence, the most interesting progress with its progress, the most interesting improvement, though an obstinate reluctance had engaged her from an only child, that child had never ceased to remember her, with respect and affection.

The object which had so lately presented itself in the villa del Marmó, still remained covered.



## CHAP. XVIII.

- "The Gods, in bounty, work up storms about us
- "That give mankind occasion to exert
- "Their hidden strength, and throw out into practice
- "Virtues which shun the day, and lie conceal'd
- "In the smooth seasons and the calms of life."

ADDISON.

No event of importance occurred till they reached Florence, where the Marquis found letters from Madame de Sevrac's relations, acquainting her, that Lady Susan Montrose, by order of her physicians, had quitted England, and was then on her route towards Italy. Madame de Sevrac, who had not seen her mother since the period that she was married to the Marquis, was sensibly affected by this alarming intelligence: Lady Susan was near sixty years of age; and declining health, at that period, brings, with its progress, the most terrifying symptoms. Though an obstinate resentment had estranged her from an only child, that child had never ceased to remember her, with respect and tenderness.

The object which had so lately presented itself at the villa del Marmo, still made a melan-

choly impression on de Sevrac's mind. The misfortunes of Signora Paulina, and the distress which they occasioned to her venerable and generous father, would have enervated the Marquis's fortitude, had he not found a busy scene to act, which required his immediate attention. The letter which Ravillon had written to Jaquiline proclaimed the route which he had taken, and justice to mankind required, that no pains should be spared where the punishment of such a villain was their object. The Marquis, therefore, determined, without delay, to visit Naples; and Madame de Sevrac was requested to prepare, with all possible expedition, for the journey.

St. Clair, whose destiny led him the same way, again begged leave to be the companion of their journey; and they agreed, at the end of three days, to set out together. No news had arrived respecting Robine, or Signor Lupo; and on sending to the chateau at Cortona, they found that the steward and Jaquiline had escaped also: thus, by the lenity, or inadvertency of the Marquis, a powerful and remorseless phalanx was let loose upon the world; seasoned in crimes, and eager to prey upon the innocent and unguarded. But the desperate Ravillon was the grand spring in the vast machine of villainy; all the lesser movements were at his command; and the Marquis was not without hope, that if he were once arrested, every inferior instrument of evil would want energy, as well as motive, to continue in action.

Lemoine again entreated the Marquis to accept assistance, and was again peremptorily refused.

refused. A small sum which Madame de Sevrac had received from England enabled them to commence their journey; and the Marquis promised Lemoine, that in case of necessity, he would apply to him for a farther remittance. There was a reason which prevented Lemoine's explaining the cause of his zealous attachment, and which he feared, if known, would entirely estrange him from de Sevrac: he, therefore, firmly resisted every entreaty, though urged with all the eloquence of gratitude, and repeated with all the impatience which events so mysterious naturally excited. Marianna was unremitting in her attentions to Madame de Sevrac and Sabina, till the moment of their departure; and it was with infinite reluctance that they at last separated.

Their route lay through a varied and luxurious country: every morning presented the renovated beauties of nature, and every evening their grand and sublime repose. The glowing season contributed to enrich every prospect, and the patterns of the universe was profusely decorated with every thing that could astonish and captivate. The travellers might have enjoyed the present hour, and have looked forward with something more than resignation, had not the dark deeds of Monsieur Ravillon thrown a gloom on the lengthening perspective, which told them that they had yet an awful epoch to encounter. From mere personal resentment, the Marquis felt little inclination to drag the monster forth; but the task was a duty which he owed to society,

society, and he, therefore, was determined to perform it.

They travelled expeditiously from Florence, along the most luxuriant avenues of vines and olives, here and there divided by swift streams which flowed from the cataracts of distant mountains, till they reached Sienna, where they agreed to sleep on the first night. They were fatigued with contemplating the variety of the prospects which had presented themselves during the day, and retired early to rest. The Marquis was perpetually absorbed in rumination: the unhappy derangement of Paulina preyed upon his sensibility, and the injurious conduct of Ravillon filled his mind with horror.

As soon as the dawn began to scatter red tints over the clouds which had gathered during the night, the carriage was at the door of the Auberge, and the travellers continued their journey: Sabina observed a singular depression on St. Clair's spirits, and a reserve in his manner that mortified and distressed her. The morning passed almost in continual silence: they traversed the beautiful valley leading to San Monteroni, where they arrested their course for a few hours, the weather being so intensely hot that the rays of the sun became insupportable. The place where they rested was situated at the foot of a hanging wood, and Madame de Servio proposed dining in the shade which a clump of venerable trees shed on the ground, behind the post-house. The situation was singularly romantic, and the umbrageous canopy of broad branches rendered the spot beneath less scorch-  
ed



ed than any other : a refreshing repast was  
 spread on the turf, and they resolved to re-  
 main in this delightful retreat till the sun-  
 beams should begin to descend with abated fer-  
 vour. After dinner, their conversation became  
 more lively and general; their labour of mind  
 was alleviated by silence and repose, and the  
 whole party felt reluctant to quit the  
 spot. Time flew rapidly, and the sun was  
 verging fast towards the west, when the  
 mules were ordered, and advanced towards  
 the door of the post-house. Mademoiselle  
 de Sevrac, as St. Clair handed her into  
 the carriage, remarked a painful confusion in  
 his manner, which was too striking to es-  
 cape the most indifferent observer. "Are  
 you not well?" said Sabina, earnestly. His  
 hand shook, and he replied, with a faltering  
 voice, "Well, I thank you." "Let us remain here to-night," said Ma-  
 dame de Sevrac, addressing St. Clair: "I am  
 afraid that the excessive heat of the day has  
 given you a fever; you seem fatigued and over-  
 powered." St. Clair smiled at the idea of the  
 former supposition, but his countenance evin-  
 ced the truth of the latter. "Thank Heaven, we shall soon reach Na-  
 ples," said Mademoiselle de Sevrac, as they  
 quitted the post-house. "Too soon!" replied St. Clair, sighing. "Have you never been there before?" in-  
 quired Sabina. "Never." "Then why do you feel reluctance at vi-  
 siting a place so well worth the notice of the  
 traveller?

traveller ? At Naples there are many delightful objects to contemplate," said Madame de Sevrac.

"And some unpleasing ones !" answered St. Clair.

"There are, unquestionably, several terrific features of nature in its vicinity," cried the Marquis, "and many marks of elemental convulsions : but for my own part, I would readily quit the liveliest graces of cultivation, for the wild horrors of Vesuvius. The vast and thundering column of liquid fire strikes more forcibly on the human mind than the most lucid rivulet, or the gaudiest *parterre* : it is the sublime and mighty efforts of nature that expand the thinking faculties."

"And yet there are situations," replied St. Clair, "where to lose the faculty of thought would be happiness."

"Can those who never think, be sensible of bliss ?" said Sabina, smiling.

"Certainly not," answered St. Clair. "Yet who would not rather be totally inanimate, than only susceptible of anguish ?"

"That is not your case," said Madame de Sevrac : "I know not a being existing, who is more inclined than yourself to possess every blessing that is to be obtained."

"Yet, some that are beyond my power," replied St. Clair, "are most the objects of my wishes. Man is but an unreasonable creature, with all his boasted intellect. Even the prodigality of fortune will not satisfy him. The attained is sure to satiate ; while that which is unattainable, perpetually excites his hopes, and cherishes his inquietude." Madame de

Sevrac shook her head and smiled; Sabina blushed, and made some remark on the surrounding scenery, in order to divert the subject of conversation into a new channel: St. Clair continued—

“I fear that you will think me a strange mortal, Madame de Sevrac, but I had rather suffer a thousand deaths than visit Naples. I know that it is a gay and voluptuous vortex of pleasure and dissipation; but in this short scene of existence, something is to be sought after beyond the mere gratification of the senses. We are to look for social enjoyments; connections that charm without benumbing the faculties; and mental delights, harmonized by the soft touches of taste and sensibility.

“This is moral reasoning, which I did not expect from you,” said Madame de Sevrac.

“Nor did I expect it from myself,” replied St. Clair. “If I am a professor of morality, it is because I have bought experience in that school of folly, where reason is passive, and pleasure predominant. For philosophy, which is not founded in the immutability of truth, is the mere cloak of ignorance or vice: we examine a thousand such philosophers every day, without being able to select one moral virtue.”

“What do you precisely term moral virtue?” said Sabina.

“Doing that for the benefit of mankind in general, which is neither exacted by religion, nor dictated by the laws. A voluntary rectitude, which cements the bonds of society;—which is too exalted to act beneath the dignity

nity of virtue, and too extensive to be circumscribed by rules. It is that," continued St. Clair, looking earnestly at Mademoiselle de Sevrac, "which teaches us to command inclinations, the gratification of which would prove injurious to the happiness of others; and to act with honour and delicacy, where the decencies of life would be offended by a contrary proceeding." There was a meaning in St. Clair's words which was not understood by his companions, though every syllable came with agony from his heart. They continued their journey till the close of evening, when they stopped for that night at Torrineri.

The inquietude of St. Clair's mind seemed every moment to augment; his conversation was mysterious and unconnected; the idea of visiting Naples seemed repugnant to his mind, and Mademoiselle de Sevrac, who was more interested by St. Clair's feelings than any other person of the party, could in no way account for his extraordinary conduct. Nothing material occurred till they reached that city, which was once the metropolis of the world! There the travellers were determined to rest a couple of days, and to employ every hour in contemplating its majestic ruins.

Early on the morning after their arrival, they repaired to the amphitheatre, whose colossal structure was once capable of containing fourscore thousand spectators!\* and which had stood for ages, the wonder and the admiration of

\* Vide Gibbon's Rom. Hist.



the world. While the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac wandered round the arches, Sabina took her seat on the fragment of a pillar, which had been thrown from one of the niches by the strong hand of time, and lost in meditation, was gazing on the magnificent ruin, when St. Clair addressed her.

"I am travelling towards a scene of misery!" said he, "would to God it were to my grave!" Mademoiselle de Sevrac rose hastily.

"Ah! Sabina," continued St. Clair as he walked beside her, "in a few hours you will hate me."

"Hate you! why do you think so?" He was agitated excessively.

"Would to God! I had never seen you!" continued he, "the moment which I have dreaded more than annihilation, advances rapidly, and its attendant miseries render me a very coward."

"What miseries?" inquired Sabina eagerly; "indeed you alarm me."

"Hear me and I will tell you all," replied St. Clair. At this instant the Marquis advanced across the amphitheatre, and Mademoiselle de Sevrac was left in the most torturing suspense. All the antiquities of the place could excite no farther attention from a mind agonized by doubt and apprehension. The Marquis and Madame de Sevrac, after they had visited the Campo Vaccino, and the spot which once exhibited the Forum Romanum, returned to the auberge to take an hasty dinner, and to expatiate on the

the scenes which they had contemplated during the morning.

St. Clair's melancholy had considerably augmented.—He pleaded indisposition, and requested that the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac would dispense with his attendance in their evening ramble : This excuse, which was readily accepted by them, made a strong impression on Sabina's imagination. His looks were vacant, and his voice inarticulate : she pressed him to be of their party, but he persisted in remaining at the auberge.—As they descended the stairs, Sabina loitered behind, and entreated St. Clair to compose his mind.

"Fear not Sabina," said he, "I shall soon be at rest."

"At rest !" repeated Mademoiselle de Sevrac.

"Go Sabina, do not let me detain you," said he, advancing towards the door of the apartment. I detest myself for being so childish—but my folly will soon be at an end."

Madame de Sevrac waited in the gate-way ; Sabina heard her talking with the Marquis. "I must go, St. Clair," said she, "indeed I must ;—tell me that you will tranquillize your spirits ;—that you will be happy."

"I deserve to be miserable," answered St. Clair, "leave me, leave me to my fate, I do not merit this goodness, this solicitude."—The Marquis continued conversing with Madame de Sevrac—Sabina had not power to follow them, while St. Clair was so violently agitated—he held her hand—he burst into an agony of tears.

"Oh, God! is it in my power still to excite these emotions?" exclaimed St. Clair, "I who have forfeited all claims to your esteem."

"Think of the past no more," interrupted Mademoiselle de Sevrac, "look only to the future."

"The future!" repeated St. Clair wildly, "distraction is in the thought—Go, go, Madame de Sevrac waits for you."

"Say that you will not"—

"What?" interrupted St. Clair.

"Be rash or impatient," replied Sabina; "we will talk of this when I return."

"Three words will render all future conversation useless," answered St. Clair, "hear them now, lest"—

"Lest what, St. Clair?"

He struggled with the conflicts of his heart, and again evaded the question.

"I know not what I say: I am bewildered by events, past and to come: I can avoid the latter, but I never can forget the former."

"To what do you allude?"

"Generous girl! you would reconcile me to myself," said St. Clair; "I confess that I am a pliant and feeble mortal,—at the same moment that your pity would exculpate me from the frailty of my nature."—

The Marquis and Madame de Sevrac grew impatient, and Sabina hastened to join them. —As she descended the stairs, she turned once more towards the apartment: St. Clair still stood on the landing place—"Adieu," said

said she, "be assured how much I,"—she hesitated—"esteem and"—the Marquis called, the conclusion of the sentence was broken, and St. Clair flew to his chamber little less than distracted.



## C H A P. XIX.

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
 "Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
 "To the last syllable of recorded time."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Marquis, Madame de Sevrac, and Sabina, again set out to visit the ruins, leaving St. Clair to his melancholy reflections. The evening passed in viewing the church, dedicated to the holy saint Peter; and the temple which commemorates the fame of the unholy Faustina: the Marquis, as he contemplated the latter, could not suppress a smile, which was not frequently diffused over his countenance. "How strangely do manners and characters return on the vast and perpetually revolving wheel of time!" said de Sevrac, "Faustina was, exactly what hundreds now are. If we could fancy that there is only a limited portion of animated, as there is of elemental matter; why not imagine that the soul is perpetually in a state of probation, from

from the commencement of things, till its day of final appointment."

Madame de Sevrac rallied the Marquis on the eccentricity of such an idea.

"I am no believer in the Pythagorean system," continued the Marquis; "but the strong similarity which we find in the characters of past and present times, would almost authorize an opinion, that there is an unaccountable connection of thought and action, which must originate in the very source of our existence. There can be nothing impious in the idea, even allowing it to be erroneous; for it does not take from the belief of final retribution; it only establishes the idea of a terrestrial purgatory, which can neither encourage superstition, nor pervert the principles of moral virtue."

Madame de Sevrac was deeply rapt in thought. "Every thing is possible with the Supreme!" said she.

"And I hold this doctrine, as merely possible," replied the Marquis; "have we not our Alexanders, our Brutuses, and our Anthonies: our Faustinas, and our Cleopatras? I was going to add, our Lucretias; but I wish to be correct in my exemplification. This temple was dedicated to the memory of the first of these distinguished dames, whose traits of character are thus given, as well as I can remember, by the historian. She was the wife of Marcus Antoninus, the only man living in the empire, who seemed ignorant of the irregularities of Faustina, which, according to the prejudice of every age, reflected some disgrace on the injured husband. He promoted several of her lovers to posts of honour and profit; nay more," continued the Marquis, "in his meditations he thanks the gods, who bestowed on

him a wife so faithful, so gentle, and of such wonderful simplicity of manners !”

“ So far you have exemplified your suggestion. Now where will you find your Alexanders, and your Brutuses ?” cried Madame de Sevrac.

“ France will produce them !” replied the Marquis, while a deep sigh accompanied the prediction.

Sabina, whose mind was occupied on other subjects, paid little attention to what passed at the temple of Faustina. The sinking sun reminded them that St. Clair was alone and indisposed. Mademoiselle de Sevrac complained of weariness, and they strolled slowly towards the auberge.

As soon as they entered the house, Sabina hastened to the apartment where she had left St. Clair, but he was not there. She enquired of the porter at the gate, and was informed that he had passed into the street not long before her return. Her anxiety was terrible : his carriage still remained in the court-yard of the auberge, and she was wholly at a loss to account for his absence.

“ I understood that St. Clair was indisposed,” said the Marquis ; Sabina’s eyes were full of tears, and she retired to her chamber, for a few moments, to conceal her inquietude.

Day closed, but no St. Clair returned ; supper waited till midnight ; the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac became anxiously impatient.— The weather was sultry, and as the moon shone clear, Sabina proposed visiting the amphitheatre ; —“ The effect by this light,” said she, “ must be singularly beautiful.” The Marquis seconded the idea, and they set out immediately after supper for the coliseum.

They

They found St. Clair walking with the hermit, whose little dwelling stands on one side of the majestic ruin. On de Sevrac's approaching them, St. Clair turned towards him,—“these are the moments,” said he, “to contemplate objects which inspire the most pleasing melancholy; which fill the mind with reflections, abstracted from the turmoil of life, at once enlightening and harmonizing the soul. This solitary hermit, who passes his days beneath these mouldering walls, tells me that he is the happiest of mortals.” The venerable recluse bowed assent, and they walked slowly round the inside of the building.

The moon beams penetrating the encircling arches, threw regular and bright columns of light across the earth, which, combining with the stillness of the hour, rendered the scene sublimely magnificent. Madame de Sevrac took the arm of the Marquis;—Sabina leaned on St. Clair's, and they advanced before their companions, who were engaged in earnest conversation with the hermit.

“Indeed, St. Clair,” said Mademoiselle de Sevrac, while her voice faltered, “you alarmed me excessively: the agitation of mind in which I left you, gave birth to a thousand painful apprehensions.”

“Sabina!” interrupted St. Clair, “the interest which you express in whatever concerns me, is the origin of all my wretchedness; your kindness destroys me; your virtues, your graces, your pity, and your esteem, are the sources of that anguish which will only terminate with my existence. I have never dared to tell you what I have long felt; I have never professed that which  
my



my heart every moment tacitly acknowledges : —The hour draws near when I must either deceive you, or stigmatize myself." Mademoiselle de Sevrac's bosom throbbed with apprehension : they were nearly on the opposite side of the coliseum from the Marquis and Madame de Sevrac, who still conversed with the hermit : St. Clair in a low voice continued.

" From the first hour that I beheld you at the forest of Montnoir, my fate has been decided ; in a moment of resentment against your father, I quitted the chateau-neuf ; all the varying scenes of dissipation presented themselves at Florence, and I became a libertine, not from principle, but from despair. False is that doctrine which inculcates profligacy as a cure for rooted and intellectual attachment ; the mind that is not by nature vicious, however it may wander, still looks towards its original dwelling ; and, like a prodigal, returns with tenfold rapture, to the home that it has deserted."

" Why exculpate yourself to me ?" cried Mademoiselle de Sevrac, " I have no right to be your monitress."

" Would to God you had !" replied St. Clair ; " from precepts, such as your mind would convey, happiness could not fail to follow ! I should not then be doomed to suffer a life of irremediable anguish." He hesitated, and Mademoiselle de Sevrac trembled. The Marquis approached them : the explanation which caused such painful sensations in the bosom of St. Clair, and such fearful curiosity in that of Sabina, was again interrupted, and they returned to the auberge more agitated than ever.

The

The time allowed only a few hours of rest, and early in the morning the travellers set forward on their journey. Mademoiselle de Sevrac's mind was tortured with suggestions, and already impressed with anticipated sorrows: she could only attribute St. Clair's conversation to the consciousness of a passion which he apprehended would never be sanctioned by his relations. She knew that he was heir to a splendid fortune, and had often heard him condemn the pride and arrogance of his family connections. She pitied St. Clair, at the same moment that all the dignity of her nature was roused to sustain her fortitude, and to resist despair.

At noon they rested, as they had done on the preceding day. Sabina, stung to the soul, by the idea that St. Clair was influenced by the base and narrow prejudices of the world, evinced less attention towards him than usual: she avoided his conversation, and, during the whole day, assumed a gaiety which her heart did not feel.

They stopped to dine near the lake Albano, on the borders of which stands the castle of Gandolfo, a situation beautifully romantic and secluded. St. Clair, who wished, as much as possible, to retard his arrival at Naples, proposed passing the evening on the lake, and examining the interior of the castle. This plan was acceded to, and the post-master was ordered to have his mules ready at day-break. As soon as the fervor of the sky began to subside, the Marquis and St. Clair strolled towards the lake, while Madame de Sevrac and Sabina visited a neighbouring convent of Grey Sisters; they were kindly and courteously received: and, charmed with the conversation of the Abbess, protracted their visit  
till

till the close of twilight. The convent was situated in the bosom of a forest, almost impenetrable; the only road which led to it was a narrow winding path, that, even at mid-day, was overcast with a gloom well suited to the sanctuary by which it terminated.

When night approached, the Abbess counselled them to depart. "We have," said she, "lately heard of many strange and alarming events in the forest. The road which leads to our convent is lonesome and intricate; you may lose your way, or meet banditti; for, report says, that many travellers have been stopped, and some murdered, within these few weeks." Madame de Sevrac shuddered. It was then almost dark, and there was no man in the convent, whose protection might guide them safely through the forest: they were at a loss how to proceed.

Sabina, knowing that the Marquis would be uneasy, and that, being unacquainted with the road which they had taken, he could not set out to meet them, proposed hastening to the auberge without delay. "The later it grows, the more will our danger increase," said she. Madame de Sevrac being of a similar opinion, they took leave of the abbess, and departed.

The moon was just rising as they parted from the Abbess; the narrow road descended in a serpentine track from the convent porch to the border of the lake: they walked hastily, and every bough that rustled over their heads made them tremble with apprehension. They had proceeded more than half way through the forest, when they came to a glade, which was brightened by moon-light, almost to the clearness of day, where,

where, to their infinite consternation, they beheld two men sitting on the turf, in earnest conversation.

Madame de Sevrac and Sabina darted across the corner of the glade, and continued to run swiftly along the winding path. Their bosoms throbbed with fear, which seemed to lend them wings; but their terror was scarcely supportable, when they distinctly heard footsteps pursuing them, and a voice exclaiming, "Stop, or you perish." They were, in a few moments, overtaken: one of the robbers seized Madame de Sevrac, the other secured Sabina. The path was so dark that their features were not visible. "We seek not your lives, it is Sabina that we demand," said one, while the other seized the person of Mademoiselle de Sevrac.

An involuntary shriek echoed through the solitude; the ruffian desisted, and a carriage approached on the high road, which passed along the skirts of the forest: Again Sabina shrieked; the traveller stopped, and, leaping from his chaise, ran to her assistance. It was Monsieur Lemoine; who fired, and wounded the villain. Madame de Sevrac instantly knew him, and was, with Sabina, conducted to the carriage, where Marianna sat almost overwhelmed with terror. The joy which this fortunate event occasioned, was infinite: the robbers escaped, and the party proceeded to the auberge, in search of the Marquis.

Monsieur Lemoine informed de Sevrac, that he was hastening to Naples on business of the utmost importance. "I am going," said he, "to assist a friend who is as dear to me as a brother: a friend, to whom I owe such obligations



ons as never can be repaid." The augmentation of the party afforded pleasure to every individual, and they travelled together till they reached Naples.

They stopped at an hôtel facing the Bay, where they were immediately accommodated with spacious and convenient apartments. It was evening when they arrived, and the edge of curiosity being blunted for a time, by the fatigue of a long and sultry journey, the women retired to rest, while the Marquis, St. Clair, and Lemoine, remained drinking. They drew their table towards the window, which opened to a balcony, fronting the sea : the delicious wines which were set before them, the cool breezes that scarcely ruffled the water, and the pale beams of the moon, which rendered the distant mountains in the neighbourhood of Posilipo faintly visible, beguiled the time, and it was past midnight before they thought of separating.

## C H A P. XX.

"I cou'd a tale unfold  
 "Whose lightest word would harrow up thy soul."

SHAKESPEARE.

MONSIEUR Lemoine was the first who retired, and St. Clair remained alone with the Marquis. The serene and fascinating prospect which their balcony commanded, the bright moon, reflected in quivering columns on the Bay of Naples; the stilly sound of the waves, splashing against the shore; the dark outline of the distant mountains, and the silent hour which ushers in the morning, united to tranquilize de Sevrac's mind, and to prepare it for the unbounded confidence of friendship.

They had drunk several flasks of rich wine, and were but little inclined to sleep: St. Clair proposed a walk by the sea side, and de Sevrac readily acquiesced. For some time they were occupied in contemplating the city, gradually rising in a magnificent semi-circle from the sea, and seeming to extend its broad arms round the  
 emporeum

emporium of Italy. The din of business subsiding, the only sounds which met the ear were the gentle whispers of the elements, and the clocks which struck the hours. If one period in the routine of time can harmonize the mind more than another, it is that awful interval when labour sinks to rest, and reason wakes to meditation.

"I feel," said the Marquis, as he looked towards the mountains of Messina, "that this pilgrimage of sorrow will very shortly terminate."

"I trust that your prediction will prove true," cried St. Clair, "and that you will at last be happy."

"Ah! my friend!" replied the Marquis, "happiness is not for me on this side the grave! Annihilation may put a period to my mortal sufferings; but existence and peace of mind I do not look for: experience has taught me that in the dark tablet of my fate they are incompatible! I have long promised to unfold the fatal secret of my bosom; this tranquil hour invites to confidence, and if your patience can endure a melancholy story, I will be brief in telling it: the recital will be painful, but I trust that the participation of sympathy will lighten the burthen which has almost destroyed me." St. Clair was all attention, and the Marquis continued.

"In the early part of my life, before I was of age, I conceived a passion for a beautiful girl, young, and unacquainted with the world, like myself: I loved her tenderly; her heart, which was as ingenuous as nature, prompted her to confess a reciprocal attachment, and we lived but for each other. Her father was an honest

nest *bourgeois*,\* whose fondness educated her above her fortune, and whose ambition taught him to hope for an advantageous marriage. With this view, the beautiful Adelaide became the protégée of a distant relation, who, by her union with the Viscount de Mortange, was placed in that rank of society which promised to accelerate the hopes of Adelaide's father.

"Madame de Mortange was an obstinate bigot. She discovered my passion for her élève, and without hesitation questioned me on the subject. I could not deny what every action and every look discovered. I confessed my attachment, and demanded her counsel: she gave it. "See her no more," said Madame de Mortange; "your father will never consent to your marrying a plebeian; and should your passion for Adelaide be made known to him, the inevitable ruin of her family would follow."

"Perplexed and hopeless, yet doating on the object of my wishes, I continued, hour after hour, to imbibe that poison which could not fail to undermine my happiness. Every day I beheld the artless Adelaide, growing in beauty, and increasing in affection: yet I had not resolution to fly, nor had the courage to command my departure. Madame de Mortange began to dread the dangers of our augmenting fondness: she reflected that I was but a man; young, susceptible, romantic, and impetuous; she knew me better than I knew myself; I thought that I could curb the animation of my heart, and fashion its desires by the cool touch of reason. Oh! God! How falsely do we judge ourselves!" De Sevrac, for several minutes, was unable to proceed: after a painful struggle, he continued.

"Adelaide

\* Tradesman.



“Adelaide was recalled to Paris : the fatal letter which separated us for ever was presented to me by Madame de Mortanges. It contained the commands, and bore the signature of a parent : I was almost distracted. On the evening previous to Adelaide’s departure, she contrived to grant me an interview at a farm house, not far from the mansion of her patroness : we had much to say, but our hearts were too full of sorrow, to give our language utterance. Adelaide leant on my bosom, and wept ; her tears unmanned me : I was wild and frantic ! A thousand tender sighs, a thousand fond embraces, increased the fever of my soul ! The period rapidly approached when we were destined to separate eternally : I pressed her to my palpitating heart ;—Oh ! St. Clair ! Her’s beat in the sweet unison of love, and all the world was lost in that blest moment !

“On her bosom, which throbbed with agonizing conflicts, she wore a little cross of ebony : “Take this,” said she, “and let it be a pledge of faith between us.” She loosed it from her neck ; I snatched it eagerly, and with a trembling hand engraved the word *remember*, kissed the sacred relick, and restored it to its native heaven, the bosom of the gentle Adelaide !

“She pressed it to her heart : “Yes, my Hubert,” said she, “I will remember ! While I have life, this precious pledge shall never be removed ; and when I die—it shall be sent to tell the fatal termination of all my sorrows !” We parted : early on the following morning she set out for Paris, and I hastened to Versailles, to meet my father ; resolving to confess my attachment

attachment for Adelaide, and to implore his consent for our immediate union.

"I found the Marquis, with a large circle of his friends, at supper; among the number there was one whom I had been taught to respect, and in whose power over my father I strongly confided. The bottle went round, and I waited impatiently for the departure of the convivial assembly: I was anxious to unfold my sufferings, and every thought was devoted to my beloved Adelaide, at the moment when a domestic brought me a letter: I retired to an adjoining apartment, for the superscription told me from whose hand it came. The seal was eagerly broken, and I read the contents: they informed me that the object of my idolatry was, on the following day, to be immured in a cloister; that her father had commanded, and she was obliged to obey. The letter closed with a prayer for my happiness, and the word *remember*. Oh! St. Clair! how shall I describe my feelings! floating almost to phrenzy; cursing the paltry distinctions which divide society, and which destroyed my hopes; knowing that the mind of Adelaide placed her above all adventitious claims, and compelled, at the same moment, to resign her for ever, I raved like one deprived of reason, when the friend in whom I placed implicit confidence, entered the room.

"He conjured me to acquaint him with the cause of my distraction: I gave him the fatal letter, and briefly stated my misfortune. He smiled. "Leave the affair to me," said he, "and I will arrange it decisively. Your Adelaide shall have her liberty, and you your mistress, if that will make you happy." I blest this monster!

monster ! I kissed his hands ; I bathed them with tears : " Give me but Adelaide," said I, " and command my life ; it will be at your disposal." I hastened to my chamber, and passed a night of agony : the tumults of ungovernable passion ragged in every vein ; I was delirious ! mad !

" At day-break, I received a visit from my father : he entered my apartment with a mien that bespoke the purpose of his visit. He approached my bed, where I lay scarcely alive. " Hubert," said he, " your carriage waits : you must begone immediately, or you must renounce the name of son : the Abbe Le Blanc will accompany you on your travels." I started from my pillow ; and was preparing to speak, when he sternly interrupted me. — " I will hear no remonstrance," continued my father : " it is my command, and I must be obeyed." He quitted the chamber ; I rose and dressed myself. My kind and affectionate tutor conjured me to be patient, and to take the counsel of my parent : he represented the ruin which would follow resistance, and attributed the barbarous sentence to a momentary displeasure, which could only be subdued by my obedience. The carriage was at the door, and, with the Abbe Le Blanc, I departed for Flanders ; hating life, and longing for annihilation ; but, alas ! I was reserved to do penance for my crime.

" You cannot call the noblest passion of the soul a crime," said St. Clair.

" Hear me and then judge," continued de Sevrac ; I had scarcely travelled three posts from Paris, when a courier overtook me with a letter ; it was from my friend, informing me, that the father of Adelaide was shut up for ever, in the deepest

deepest dungeon of the bastille. The letter dropped from my hand, and I almost lost the powers of recollection.

"Would to God! they had never been restored! I wrote to Adelaide, but received no answer. I struggled with mental torture, till nature was exhausted in the contest, and I was reduced to extreme danger. My father was sent for, he came, he smiled at my despair, "Weak boy," said he, "thy Adelaide was unworthy thy attachment, for since thy departure from Paris, she is married."

"And her father—" said I eagerly,—

"Dead!" replied the Marquis.

"My anguish was complete. The fatal intelligence struck deep into my heart, and the vital circulation was for a time suspended; yet I lived, St. Clair! lived, to meet the inevitable hour of retribution! The murdered parent was sent to heaven, with evidence to damn me!

"I flew to Paris, I hastened to the house of my lost victim, whom I had never seen; it was shut up; I repaired instantly to Madame de Mortange; she would not admit me; I sought my barbarous friend, de Briancour; reproached him for the rash step which he had taken, and cursed myself for being the instigator of it. He smiled. "Keep your own secret," said he, "and it will never be divulged. These things happen every day; they are the privileges which are annexed to power; the only effectual basis on which prerogative has built the bulwark of the throne."

"I embraced an early opportunity to throw myself on the mercy of the king; he heard my story; but de Briancour's power was not to be over



over-ruled; he had the full command of the *lettre de cachet*, and humanity was destined to plead in vain, for the emancipation of innocence.

“My heart shuddered; every feeling was awakened to compunction: the story respecting the marriage of Adelaide was confirmed by my not being able to discover her retreat. After a month passed in fruitless researches, again I set out upon my travels. The idea, that the object of my regret had forfeited all claims to my affection, called forth my pride; resentment followed, and indignation was the sure prelude to indifference: my heart just weaned from its attachment was softened for a new impression; I saw Emily Montrose; she was amiable and lovely; I married her. Now comes my torture!”—de Sevrac’s agitation increased as he proceeded.

“On my return to Paris, a short time before my father’s death, I found myself an object of universal censure. The buzzing tongue of mischief was busied in defaming me, and I was reported as the seducer of Adelaide, and the destroyer of her father. I shrunk at self conviction. I could not disavow the latter charge, and to my utter consternation, I soon discovered that the dark tale of cruelty was propagated by de Briancour: I taxed him; he denied it. Conscious how much I deserved to suffer for my crime, I had no remedy; every step that I could take, would tend to blazon my own conduct, and to bring forth proofs that would stamp my name with infamy: I was content to suffer. The splendours of the court, the honours daily heaped upon me after my father’s death, like destructive opiates, deadened the present sense of anguish, only to enflame the fever of remorse: St. Clair,  
can

can you believe it possible, that the glare of lustre which surrounded me dazzled my weak mind, and at times obliterated even the memory of my victim? Yet, as I towered in popularity, I found a persecuting rival in de Brancour: the story of Adelaïde was a never-failing source for his malevolence; but I perceived that my associates considered the event as of little importance, and as it grew familiar to every ear, I also heard it with increased indifference.

“ Six years after my marriage, Madame de Mortange was seized with a dangerous malady; she sent for me; unconscious of her purpose, I hastened to obey her summons. I found her expiring; as I approached her bed, she stretched forth her hand—“ De Sevrac,” said she, with a feeble voice, “ I have a circumstance of the utmost importance to unfold, and cannot quit the world with resignation till I have unburdened my full heart—Adelaïde——.” I trembled, she continued——

“ The victim of your ungovernable passions—lives—to mourn your fickle nature and her own credulity!—Lives, de Sevrac—to weep for the sufferings of her captive father!” I could not reply. Horror laid hold on every faculty, while she resumed the terrible disclosure.

“ Yes, de Sevrac,” continued Madame de Mortange, “ the unfortunate parent of the deserted Adelaïde is now the solitary tenant of a beamless dungeon. Near seven years have passed since he beheld the sun! Oh! if you would make your peace with God & rescue the venerable man, and give him to his child.”

“ Where shall I find her?” said I, in an agony of horror.

“ Madame de Mortange, exhausted by the exertion she had made, fainted ; in a few moments, death closed the tablet of despair, and I was left in a state of incertitude, that rendered annihilation enviable. Again every effort was tried to obtain the release of the prisoner, but without success. — The wretch who was once condemned to pass his days in the abode of hellish tyranny, had little chance of again beholding the light ; and that little was wrested from him by my inveterate enemy, de Briancour ; whose only motive for the deed of horror, was to sully my rising fame, to check my power, which encroached rapidly on his own, and to stamp my memory with an act that would damn it to posterity.”

As the Marquis concluded his narrative, the moon sunk behind the mountains, and the first glimpse of dawn displayed a cold gray tint, which blending with the vapours rising from the sea, gave a new aspect to every surrounding object. They walked for several minutes without resuming their conversation, till their attention was fascinated by a group of men hastening to a boat which was moored near the bay, and seeming to wait on one who, by his dress, was of a superior class in society. They embarked, and rowed with eager expedition towards the opposite shore.

“ These are not sailors,” said the Marquis, “ they are lazzaroni : this hour of dawn-light, and their hasty departure, convince me that they meditate some secret enterprize.”

They watched the boat, as it receded from Naples : the cars were visible long after the sound of their strokes was lost in distance ; till the mists which began to descend from the mountains of Sicily, being broken by the rising rays of the sun  
blended

blended with those which floated over the sea, and intercepted their view, while its principal object lessened into nothing.

Monsieur de Sevrac and St. Clair returned to the auberge ; agreeing, on the following day to commence their researches after Ravillon, and his accomplice, Signor Lupo.



## CHAPTER XXI.

" ——— Ere the bat hath flown  
 " His cloistered flight ; ere to black Hecate's summons,  
 " The ihard-borne beetle, with his drowfy hums,  
 " Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done  
 " A deed of dreadful note.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE various and painful emotions which Monsieur de Sevrac had felt, during the recital of his fatal secret, prevented his taking any rest, and an hour after sun-rise he again quitted his chamber : the day was devoted to enquiries after Ravillon, but no intelligence being obtained, the whole party determined on crossing without delay to Sicily. St. Clair, who considered himself as bound to assist in the detection of a villain who had meditated his destruction, as well as that of the Marquis, had another reason for wishing to quit Naples. Lemoine insisted also on accompanying

ing de Sevrac on his expedition: a small vessel was hired for the voyage, and they purposed sailing on the same evening.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac rose early to write letters, and quitted her chamber for that purpose: she had not remained long in the saloon, when St. Clair entered. He had not been in bed the whole night: his mien was extremely disordered, and his countenance strongly impressed with sorrow. He approached Sabina, and with an agitated voice, requested that she would allow him a moment's conversation. "I will not detain you long, Mademoiselle de Sevrac," said he with a faltering voice, "what I have to say, will demand but a few words, and perhaps they will be the last that I shall ever utter." Sabina started from her seat: the tone and manner of St. Clair terrified her.

"For heaven's sake," cried she hastily, "what new calamity has befallen us?"

"To you it is no calamity," replied St. Clair, "but to me—" he hesitated.

"What concerns you, must interest my feelings," cried Sabina.

"Would you participate in my grief, if I were to tell you, that I was the most wretched of mortals, the most curst, the most despairing?"

"Indeed I would," replied Mademoiselle de Sevrac, with a sigh that bore witness of her sincerity.—St. Clair was doubly afflicted by the gentleness of her words, and with some difficulty proceeded.

"Then, Sabina, hear a confession which I have never had resolution to make, but which it would now be infamous to withhold, because I fear that you are interested in my fate, and that I am honoured with your friendship."

"My friendship!" repeated Mademoiselle de Sevrac with a smile of tender reproach, "my friendship! Ah, St. Clair! do I deserve such an unkind reproof?"—

"Your affection," continued St. Clair, with his eyes bent on the ground.

Mademoiselle de Sevrac made no answer, but blushed and turned from him.

"I comprehend that eloquent and graceful silence," said St. Clair, snatching her hand and pressing it to his lips, "my destiny is now sealed, and"—he endeavoured to rush out of the saloon; his features were wild, and his heart seemed bursting with agony. "Oh! St. Clair, yet stay and tell me the cause of this new distraction," cried Sabina, holding his arm, with trembling perturbation.

"I cannot, Sabina;—I cannot tell thee that, which will—

"Destroy me!" interrupted Sabina,—“well, be it so; I am ready to participate in your griefs, St. Clair, even if they annihilate me.” He darted out of the room; she flew to the long balcony at the front of the house, on which the windows of St. Clair's apartment also opened.—Nearly frantic with apprehension, she approached them, and rushed into his chamber; as she entered, a pistol dropped from

from the hand of St. Clair,, and he fell on his bed like a wretch deprived of reason. Mademoiselle de Sevrac's situation was terrible: she took his hand, and scarcely knowing what she did, kissed it with painful emotion. "Oh! St. Clair, rash and unkind St. Clair,!" exclaimed she, "what would you do; would you annihilate one that loves you so tenderly?—" At these words he started from his bed, and falling on his knees, embraced her with agonized emotion.

"Tell me why you are afflicted?" said Mademoiselle de Sevrac, at the same time repulsing him gravely but not harshly.

"Oh! Sabina," answered St. Clair, "I am"—

"What?"

"Married!"

Mademoiselle de Sevrac stood like a statue petrified with surprise; till in a few minutes recovering the power of speech, she replied—"Then be happy! and continue to deserve my friendship."

"Generous angel!" cried St. Clair,— "most perfect, most liberal of women! yes, I will deserve thy friendship, thy affection!" Sabina shuddered.

"The most pure, the most sacred affection!" continued St. Clair; "the proud congeniality of souls, which can love without debasement! The intercourse of minds united by celestial sympathy!—Oh! Sabina, such love as thine will grace the faculties of reason, expand the heart with every noble, every glorious senti-



ment, and teach it to pity those who cannot appreciate its value.—My wife was the object of my father's choice.—Her fortune was the charm that won him; and my paternal title was the phantom that purchased her. We have ever been separated since the year of our marriage, and her hatred is only to be equalled by my indifference.”

“Forbear,” interrupted Sabina, “she is your wife, St. Clair,—respect her,—but never let me hear her name.—I should be sorry to confess a single thought, that could render me unworthy of your good opinion.” They parted, Mademoiselle de Sevrac flew to her chamber, and sought relief from those tears, which pride had taught her to suppress during the interview with St. Clair.

The day passed, and in the evening they set sail from the bay of Naples, with a prosperous wind, and a determined resolution to act with vigour. The weather was beautifully serene, the sea was only ruffled by breezes sufficient to waft the vessel over the waves: but towards midnight a fresh gale sprung up, which in the course of an hour, augmented to a tempest. The thunder rolled in rattling peals; the lightning, darted through the black and almost suffocating atmosphere, at intervals illumined the deck, and presented the sea foaming and bounding with terrific fury! the passengers were doubly alarmed by the apparent apprehensions of the sailors; who slackened in their toil, in proportion as they called upon their saint for succour; while the  
 elemental

elemental strife grew louder, and the bursting clouds cast forth incessant shafts of fire, which directed their mazy courses in every direction!

The vessel at length became ungovernable; rocking from side to side, as the wind fell; or plunging with the resistless waves which one minute swelled to the sky, and the next seemed to divide in liquid mountains: in this dreadful situation they had remained near an hour, deafened by the clashing sounds of the contending winds and waters; when, on a sudden, they beheld a column of fire bursting from the crater of Vesuvius, and hurling forth its burning entrails, as if to complete the horrors of the tumultuous scene! The bright red flame presented a terrible contrast to the blue coruscations which flashed round them; and wherever the eye turned, it encountered some new object, to appall the soul and quell its resolution.

The dawn at last began to break, when the Marquis and his companions discovered that the vessel was driven back to the eastern side of the Island of Caprea. The storm was less furious, and the horizon brightened, when the pilot proposed running into a small creek near the promontory; the rigging being too much damaged to allow of their proceeding, while the swell of the sea continued. With infinite difficulty, and no less danger, their plan was accomplished, and the exhausted party was safely landed on the island.

They instantly repaired to the house of a fisherman, which was situated near the beach. Every accommodation which the place afforded was supplied by the islander, whose small habitation

was seldom v'sited except in cases of similar necessity. As the sailors could not continue their voyage till the next morning, de Sevrac and his associates had no remedy but patience; and while the women endeavoured to sleep, the Marquis, St. Clair, and Lemoine, proceeded to examine the antiquities of the island.

At the close of the day, the atmosphere, being cleared by the recent storm, looked more than commonly bright, while the sun's last rays diffused a warmth which was cheering without being oppressive. The sea, as if wearied by the turbulence of the winds, became smooth, and its gently panting waves exhibited their green surface, in contrast with the glowing horizon which seemed to encircle them: till, by degrees, they blended in one dark shade, which wholly obliterated every distinction of colour or of element. De Sevrac had strolled with his two friends along the shore, and was returning to the fisherman's house, when their attention was fascinated by the group of lazzaroni, hastening towards the boat in which they had on the preceding morning departed from Naples. They were eight in number, and before the Marquis could reach them, they embarked and rowed from land, with the utmost expedition.

The moon had risen, and the boat was visible for some time, while the regular strokes of the oars vibrated over the smooth ocean as they proceeded towards Naples. The Marquis returned to the islander's hut; where Madame de Sevrac and her two companions had provided a small supper. The fisherman waited on them cheerfully, and, being much refreshed by sleep, they agreed to pass the time in conversation, till the dawn

dawn should announce their departure. The vessel lay about fifty yards from the door, and the sailors were at any time within hearing: they had plenty of arms on board, and de Sevrac as well as his two friends, had each a brace of pistols for immediate defence, in case that any outrage should be attempted.

While they were at supper, one of the sailors belonging to the vessel abruptly entered, and with a countenance of terror, beckoned the Marquis towards the door. St. Clair and Lemoine instantly rose to attend him: "Fear nothing," whispered de Sevrac, "remain here and protect the women; if I should want you, I will give a signal." He followed the sailor, and they ascended a small acclivity on the beach, from whence the Marquis observed a strong glare of light near the foot of the promontory: it dazzled for a few moments and then disappeared. Still they watched the spot, and presently a torch was seen moving slowly along, till, on a sudden, it sunk into the earth and vanished.

"This is strange!" said de Sevrac, "is there any habitation near the promontory?"

"Not that I ever heard of," replied his companion.

"No hut of any kind?"

"None," answered the sailor. They entered the house, where the Marquis briefly stated what he had seen. The fisherman interrupted him.—"I perceive such lights every night," said he, "but I never mind them."

"Why should you?" inquired St. Clair, "is there any cause for alarm? who lives near the promontory?"

"Nobody."—

"From



"From whence then did the torch proceed?" cried de Sevrac.

"Some say that that part of the island is haunted," replied the fisherman; "but I take the lights to be nothing more than vapours, which the sea collects during the heat of the day."

"There is something rational in this conjecture," said St. Clair; "but whatever they are, we will visit them."

"You had better not venture," cried the fisherman, earnestly: "many have gone thither; but none have ever returned alive, to tell the success of their errand."

"Indeed! then we will know the reason," answered the Marquis, smiling. "Hast thou any torches, that we may take to shew the way? Come, thou shalt be our guide, and we will pay thee handsomely for thy trouble."

"Go not, I beseech you," cried the fisherman; "you know not the peril which will attend the enterprize."

"Thou art right," replied Lemoine, "we cannot know till we have made the trial. Come give us torches, and do not seek to amuse us with idle tales, for we are determined."—The fisherman, finding that there was no chance of persuading his guests, provided them with lights, and the Marquis, St. Clair, and Lemoine, and four sailors, all armed, proceeded towards the promontory.

The night was calm and the moon began to decline when they arrived at the foot of the ascent, where they discovered, shrouded by a thick plantation of trees, a vast and stupendous ruin: the entrance was through a lofty arch,

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corroded by time, but magnificently constructed. They stopped for a few minutes and listened, every thing within was as silent as the grave. They passed along a spacious hall, paved with black marble, and covered with a roof of grand and beautiful architecture ; through chasms of which, the night breezes moaned with a low and melancholy sound. Still they advanced without interruption, till they came to a door that had been left a-jar, and which, on being pushed, instantly opened.—

They ascended a broad staircase of tessellated stone, which led them to a lofty and spacious apartment ; no noise was heard, but the murmuring of the wind, and the sound of the breakers which dashed upon the adjacent shore. Nothing living was to be seen except themselves, and the solitary bats which flitted round their torches : they traversed the great apartment, and entered a chamber ; the walls were painted in aquatinta, and the ceilings curiously fretted. A marble table stood in the middle of the apartment, on which lay a large book in black binding. The Marquis opened it, and beheld a long list of names, all signed with blood : he closed the leaves, and made a sign for his companions to follow.

They proceeded to an inner and still larger apartment, where they discovered, by a lamp which stood on a table, two men sleeping, with several flasks before them. They seemed inebriated almost to total insensibility : the Marquis placed the sailors outside the door, with the torches, while, with St. Clair and Lemoine, he stole softly towards the table : the men continued to sleep soundly ; their poniards lay before them.

them. One had his right arm covered with blood ; and his hand, which was deeply gashed in several places, was still bleeding ; but intoxication, almost to death, prevented their waking, till de Sevrac had secured the dagger of the one, and Lemoine that of the other :—the sailors on hearing the Marquis's signal rushed in, and the ruffians being overpowered, were consigned to them, while de Sevrac continued his researches.

They descended by a stair-case, which shook beneath their footsteps, till they reached a dark and gloomy colonnade, festooned with ivy and wild weeds, which at different places intercepted the moon-light, and rendered the spot peculiarly appalling. Still de Sevrac ventured, and still his companions followed, till entering a spacious temple, their torches being wasted by the current of air, suddenly became extinguished, and they were left in total darkness.—

## C H A P. XXII.

"It will have blood they say; blood will have blood."—

MACBETH.

"The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge."

HAMLET.

THEY continued to wander about till daylight, when they found themselves in a cavern, whose entrance was washed by the frequent waves that broke upon the shore. The roof was arched and craggy; the surges, as they dashed against its flinty threshold, echoed to the centre of the mountain; while the slightest breeze moaned with a dismal sound, through the fissures which had been made in various places, by time and situation, which was exposed to the united fury of the winds and waters.

The ground in many places exhibited the track of human footsteps, and they all seemed to lead towards a niche which was wholly dark, and in the farthest corner of the cavern; de Sevrac was eager to explore the secret nook, but St. Clair and Lemoine counselled him to proceed with caution: as the obscurity of the place rendered the attempt useless without a torch, the fisherman was dispatched to fetch one, while the Marquis and Lemoine guarded the niche till his return, St. Clair keeping a strict watch at the entrance of the cavern.

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The fisherman soon brought the torch, and they proceeded to examine the recess; it terminated almost in a point, before which a large stone was placed as if by the hand of nature; to indifferent observers it would have passed as such; but curiosity and enterprize alone can discover that, which indolence and dulness would leave for ever, in the abyss of time: by many efforts, the flinty barrier was removed, and the Marquis taking the torch, entered an inner cave, which was filled with chests of various sizes and weapons of every description:—de Sevrac was astonished; but his consternation was complete when he beheld the little iron box, which contained the jewels of Madame de Sevaac, and which had been stolen from the cabriolet, in the forest near Fontebuona.

It was impossible to form any conjecture how this precious treasure became the property of banditti, for that the cavern was the haunt of such, could no longer be doubted. Ravillon was too rich to become the associate of robbers; and too desperate to relinquish his property, except with his life. They proceeded to a farther investigation; and several chests were brought to the front of the cavern, where the sun beams entered. Time grew precious, therefore as the vessel was ready to sail, they again deposited all the treasure in their niche, except de Sevrac's iron box; and, (after placing the huge block of stone before the entrance,) embarked to communicate the event, and to dispatch proper persons from Naples, for its seizure and security.

The wind blew full towards the bay, and in a few minutes they set sail from the island of Caprea. The two robbers, who had been surpriz-  
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ed while in a state of intoxication, were lashed to the mast; Madame de Sevrac with her companions took possession of the cabin; while the Marquis, St. Clair, and Lemoine, guarded the prisoners.

They had not proceeded far from land, when one of the banditti requested permission to make his defence; there was a something commanding and impressive in his tone and manner, that struck the Marquis, and he was desired to go on.

"I am here at your mercy," said the robber, "if you wish to do me a kindness, suffer me to die; for life is no longer valuable, and death will be a desirable termination of all my sorrows."

"Give up your confederates, and you shall be pardoned," said the Marquis.

The robber smiled contemptuously. "Not if the torture wrung my very heart-strings, would I betray my friends!" said he, "we are exiled nobles of all countries; and such, as they think worthy of their confidence: a chosen band, whose souls are lofty, and whose wrongs are infinite! Our crimes are not our own; for we were born to grace society; but not to be its slaves."

"What are you?"

"Men! whose miseries have driven us to despair, but who, being brave, can never be inhuman. This blood, which stains my arm, is the first that I ever shed, illegally, and it shall be the last: my comrades know that cruelty has never yet disgraced my poniard."

"What then could tempt you to become a robber?" said the Marquis.

"That,

"That, which will in time exterminate the very name of honesty, oppression. Born in the atmosphere of tyranny, and tutored in the school of sanguinary warfare, we were taught to prey upon our brother, man; and destined to behold the suffering race, scourged by their remorseless rulers. I am a Frenchman, your countryman; fourteen years since exiled from France, for having challenged a court minion, who had seduced my sister. Had I not obeyed, I should have been doomed to perish in a dungeon, with my father!—Can you condemn the spirit of revenge which mingled with my blood? Can you wonder, that the creatures of a despot became the objects of my hatred?"—De Sevrac made no answer.

"The crimes of others afford no plea for retaliation," replied St. Clair;—"reflection should have disarmed revenge, and taught you to be merciful."

"If man could at all times listen to the voice of reason; who would be rash or criminal?" said the robber. "But when the mind is basely shackled, when the noblest energies of nature are checked by tyranny, the temperate light of reason vanishes. Bewildered, lost, he rushes onward, wild and impatient, goaded by wrongs, and panting for revenge. Such was my fate; such was my reward for services performed, and laurels won in battle."

"Hast thou served?" inquired the Marquis.

"Yes! with the bravest, and the noblest soul that ever dignified the name of man! with one, whose fame will live, when despots are no more!"

"La Fayette?" said the Marquis.

"The

"The same :—what was my recompence ?" I found a sister robbed of innocence ; a father condemned to perish in the bastille !"

"Who condemned him ?" cried the Marquis eagerly.

"Hubert de Sevrac," replied the prisoner, with a look of horror.

"Did he seduce thy sister ?" said St. Clair, with emotion.

"No, that damned deed was the Count de Briancour's," replied the captive.

"Thy father's name ?" inquired the Marquis, pale and trembling.—

"Eustache.—"

"Thy sister's—?"

"Adelaide ; the beautiful Adelaide de Fleury !" De Sevrac reeled a few paces and fell into the arms of Lemoine, whose features were fixed by horror.

"Lives she still ?" cried the Marquis feebly.

"She does," whispered Lemoine, "inquire no farther, I will elucidate the mystery when we reach Naples."—De Fleury continued—

"What say ye, Frenchmen ? had I not cause for vengeance ? were those the deeds of countrymen, of nobles, placed in their lofty sphere to deal out justice, and to protect the people ?" The Marquis looked aghast, Lemoine was mute with consternation. "Now give me to the torture, if you think that I deserve it, for taking such a villain's life."

"Whose life ?" inquired St. Clair.—

"The life of de Sevrac !" answered de Fleury exultingly. "Last night he hired our boat to carry him across to Sicily ; I was on the quay when he inquired for one, and we, who assume  
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the habit of lazzaroni, were glad to make the offer. He embarked with treasure that rendered him a valuable passenger: on a small iron chest was the name of, "Hubert de Sevrac." All the passions of my soul were up in arms! nature revolted, when I beheld the destroyer of my peace, the murderer of my honour! I seized a moment when he was unguarded, and plunged my dagger in his breast."—

"What did you then?" cried St. Clair hastily, for de Sevrac had not power to speak.

"Gave him to the ocean!" replied de Fleury, shuddering.—

"The chest might not be his," said Lemoine,—"it was a rash and unpardonable act, to take the life of a fellow creature on such slender evidence: had you no other proof that it was your enemy?"

"Yes: I challenged him," answered de Fleury, "and he told me that he was the Marquis.—The monster was his own destroyer; for I never saw him till that hour, and he might have escaped had he not betrayed himself. Now ask your hearts; who is answerable for my crime? Who made me turn against my nature, and commit the deed that stains my name with blood?"

"No plea can sanction murder," said Lemoine.

"I grant it," replied de Fleury; "but when man is taught the office of a tyger; when driven by savage fury to mountain solitudes; shut out from hope, plundered of honour, condemned to live, without the means of life, torn from his native soil; his kindred scattered, and himself an exile; what can be expected from him, but revenge, winged by despair, and raging for retribution?"

retribution? What makes the man revolt? The tyranny of man! for can the creature born with reason, conscious of virtue, instinctively panting for freedom, and naturally prone to resist oppression, tamely bear the chain, the dungeon, and the scourge? bow down his neck for knaves and fools to trample on; and, like a beast of burthen, labour for the wretch that shackles him? Ask nature; reason; your own hearts! and then, if they pronounce me guilty, give to the wheel your countrymen, who killed the murderer of his father!"

"Unbind his arms," said the Marquis. The sailors loosed the cords. "Thou shalt be free."

"I will be free!" exclaimed de Fleury, at the same moment plunging amidst the waves which parted to receive him, and then closed for ever!

CH A P. XXIII.

— "O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!  
That cannot be: since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder."

SHAKESPEARE.

MADAME de Sevrac and her companions being in the cabin, escaped the scene of horror which the Marquis was condemned to witness; the vessel ploughed through the waves, and his eyes never quitted the place where de Fleury sunk, till the passengers landed on the quay at Naples. The event was too terrible to be easily effaced from a mind humane and reflecting, like that of de Sevrac; he beheld de Fleury as the victim of despotism; he saw the noblest nature and the bravest heart contaminated by revenge; and all the effects of a virtuous education destroyed by a train of events, entirely originating in experienced oppression. A thousand times he cursed the rash and cruel conduct of Monsieur de Briancour; the subtle villain, who, to keep down a rival in the sphere of power, sacrificed an innocent and helpless family. The scene

scene of present horrors he at last beheld, as the mere effect of past enormities, among which the *lettre de cachet* was an evil of the greatest magnitude. Reflection told him that the rays of truth, which had been obscured by the intervening glooms of tyranny and superstition, were now collected in one glorious beam, to illumine the whole earth ! that if ever time should unfold the pages of secret history, there would be found many de Fleury's and many de Briancours : while the dark volume would prove to the enlightened universe, that religion had been made a plea for the most inhuman sacrifices ; avarice, the source of legal prostitution ; and pride, the barrier between the virtuous and the exalted, which reason has at last overturned, and nature shudders to remember !

The passengers landed ; de Sevrac darted on shore like one that was frantic. In the scene of confusion and consternation, the other prisoner found means to loosen the cords which bound him, and to escape with intelligence to his confederates ; a large party instantly embarked for the island, and before any steps could be taken for their defection, sailed with all their treasure for the mountains of Calabria.

The moment that the Marquis arrived at the auberge, he requested to speak with Lemoine in private. They retired to an apartment for that purpose, where as soon as they entered, " Now my friend," said de Sevrac, " I entreat you to elucidate what yet remains obscure in this eventful history : if Adelaide still lives—"

" She lives," replied Lemoine, " and has long buried all her sorrows in the gloom of a monastery. To snatch a parent from the horrors of a dungeon, she sacrificed—"

" I com-



"I comprehend you," interrupted the Marquis, shuddering, "her honour to de Briancour, — infernal villain! and did she save her father? Oh! tell me that I am one degree less wretched than I thought myself."

"He was released," answered Lemoine, "after two months' confinement; on condition that he would never discover himself, but consent to pass the remainder of his days in solitude. The plea which de Briancour urged for this severe injunction, was your implacable hatred, and the vengeance which would follow your knowledge of his emancipation."

"Almighty Power!" exclaimed de Sevrac, "thou canst witness how much I abhorred the deed; how often, and how earnestly I petitioned for his release: and how sincerely I detested the false friend, whose cruelty had marked me with a crime which my soul shuddered at: and did Adelaide believe me such a villain?"

"Your neglect of her, authorized her resentment," replied Gaston, "and your marriage confirmed her affliction. She also was sworn to secrecy! no one knew that de Fleury was liberated; not even Madame de Mortange. The ill-fated victim of de Briancour's infamous proposal gave to the world a daughter; and shortly after secluded herself for ever; while the virtuous de Fleury, who knew not of the dreadful sacrifice which his darling child had made, retired to an ancient chateau of de Briancour's in Gascony."

"He lives!" exclaimed the Marquis, "the venerable Eustache lives! and I have seen him!" He could not articulate another syllable, but falling on Gaston's neck, wept like an infant. At length recovering his speech, he again question-

ed Lemoine respecting Adelaide. "I will see her once more," said de Sevrac, "I will implore her pardon, and then wait my appointed hour with fortitude."

Lemoine endeavoured to dissuade him from the thought. "Estranged from society," said he, "do not awaken her from a dream of tranquillity, to experience a new scene of sorrow. All her melancholy story, her sufferings, and their progress towards resignation, I have lately received, written by her own hand. Previous to her eternal seclusion, she returned to you a little cross, as an assurance that she was dead to the world, and devoted to that peaceful solitude, where every care would rest: the pledge of faith had not been violated; for the sacrifice which she made, was prompted by such filial virtue, that nature claimed the deed; while religion dropped a tear, to heal the wounds of conscience!"

"To whom did she confide the cross?" cried the Marquis.—

"She sent it to Montnoir; you were then in England.—Her daughter—"

"Where shall I find her?" interrupted the Marquis; "I will guard her with a parent's fondness; she shall be mine; she shall be Madame de Sevrac's; I will toil to support her; I will protect her with my life—"

"She will thank you, generous de Sevrac!" replied Lemoine; "but she has ever been under the guardian shield of heaven! adopted by the Duchess de Mortange, (the mother of the Viscount) she has lately, by her death, received considerable property. She was educated at Paris, and from thence removed to Languedoc, where I married her."

"Marianna!" exclaimed de Sevrac, "is Marianna the child of Adelaide de Fleury?" At this moment she entered the room; the Marquis, overwhelmed with agitation, rushed by her, and hastened to inform Madame de Sevrac of the event: the scene was touching, and the emotions in every bosom tenderly sympathetic: yet if a pang for a moment checked the rapture of the discovery, it was de Sevrac's, for the memory of Adelaide's misfortunes.

The auberge which the Marquis had occupied before he and his companions set sail for Sicily, had, during their absence, been hired by another family, they were therefore obliged to take up their abode at an hotel in the neighbourhood. It was dark when they came to their new lodging, and the only bed-chambers which could be had that night, were situated on the third story, to which they were obliged to pass through the lower apartments: Madame de Sevrac, before supper was scarcely finished, made her excuse to retire, (being overpowered by the fatigue of the voyage,) leaving the rest of the party in earnest conversation.

She passed the anti-chamber on the first story, and knocked at the entrance of the saloon; but no answer being made, she concluded that it was empty, and ventured to open the door. She was hastening towards a small staircase, which led to her apartment from a gallery on the opposite side of the saloon, when a dim light which glimmered in an adjoining room, attracted her attention. She advanced gently; the gloomy appearance of every thing within, made her recoil for a moment; but her curiosity was changed to horror, when she perceived a superb coffin  
of

of black velvet, placed in the middle of the chamber.

The blood thrilled in her bosom ; the auberge was perfectly silent ; the apartment, which was obscure, lofty, and spacious, was surrounded with looking-glasses, every one of which reflected the object of her terror. She was too far distant from her party to make them hear, and her feet seemed rooted to the floor ; till roused by reflection, she smiled at her childish alarm, and with an awful sensation which seemed to check her curiosity, approached the coffin, where she read on the engraved plate, the name of " Susan Montrose." It was the corpse of her mother ! that mother from whom she had been estranged ever since her marriage with the Marquis : her situation was terrible. She knelt by the sable repository, which contained the author of her being, in an agony of tears ;—but her grief was unutterable. Lady Susan had expired on her journey, near Naples. The Abbé Le Blanc, who had been left at Florence to meet her, had, by the eloquence of truth, made Madame de Sevrac's peace with her mother ; who not only left her a splendid fortune, but was hastening to confirm the reconciliation, when death interposed, and separated them finally.

Madame de Sevrac had not quitted her party many minutes, when the door of the saloon where they supped was opened, and a monk approached the table. A benediction was the prelude to his errand, the purpose of which was to solicit charity. " Not for myself," said he, bowing with modest humility, " not for our fraternity, do I implore assistance ; but for one who lingers on the precincts of eternity ; destined to



take a long dark journey, for the commencement of which, he seems but ill-prepared." The monk sighed, and every arm was extended to obey his wishes.

"O ! Vergine Maria !" exclaimed the pious petitioner, "how sweetly charity becomes the noble ! how graceful is that hand which gives the blessed boon to succour the unhappy !" He pressed the donation to his lips, while he crossed his breast ; and his speaking eyes glistening with tears, repaid the deed a thousand, thousand fold.

"I will hasten to the sufferer," continued the monk, "though perhaps, before I reach our convent, his eyes will close for ever !" He was quitting the room, but returned to repeat his benediction. "Shall I tell him to whom he is indebted, if he still lives ?"

"By no means," replied the Marquis, "it is not worth recording."—

"It is recorded on an immortal tablet !" said the monk, raising his eyes to heaven.

"Let us hear how the sick man does to-morrow," said St. Clair, "if he survives the night, you shall have further assistance."

"For whom shall I enquire !" cried the father.—

"For Monsieur de Sevrac," replied St. Clair, pointing to the Marquis.

The venerable man receded several steps and looked amazed. Then approaching de Sevrac, whispered him to follow. He rose and quitted the room : the monk repeated, "follow me," and without further explanation, rushed into the street.—They walked hastily together till they arrived at a convent, where they entered : a deep groan startled the Marquis, while the father

ther opened the door of a small chamber, where, on a narrow pallet, lay the expiring Ravillon.

De Sevrac approached the bed with a mixture of surprise and horror ! the distorted features, the convulsive gasp, and the haggard eyes of one whose soul hovered on the margin of the grave, weighed down with crimes, hopeless and agonized, presented a spectacle at once awful and terrific. Ravillon was now arrived at that goal, where artifice proves ineffectual ; where the heart confesses an undisguised scrutiny ; and the guilty wretch raises the beamless eye to heaven, fearless of man, and trembling at the justice of his Creator. Tremendous period ! hour inevitable ! decisive epoch ! when conscience whispers to the ear of reflection, and the secret mazes of the heart are laid open before that Power, which is not to be deceived by cunning or by sophistry.

With an impressive solemnity the Marquis and the venerable father addressed the dying Ravillon, whose trembling limbs and agonized features displayed the conscious torments which he suffered. " I come not to reproach you," said de Sevrac, mildly, " try to make your peace with God ! and think no more of worldly retribution. I pardon you ; for the vengeance of man should subside, when the grave yawns to receive the aggressor." Ravillon fixed his eyes on the Marquis for some moments, then turning suddenly towards the monk, with an eager and convulsive voice entreated them to kneel and pray with him. As they were about to comply with his request, he stretched forth his hand to stop them : " Yet hold, de Sevrac," cried he, " and hear my confession : that holy father has already heard it." The Marquis listened attentively.

"I must be brief," cried Ravillon, "my soul is on the wing: Oh! what a gulf of darkness lies before me! de Sevrac, prepare to hear such things as will make nature shudder! you recollect my father?"

"I can just remember him; he was the faithful servant of the late Marquis de Sevrac;" said Hubert.

"And for his fidelity, he murdered him," continued Ravillon with a ghastly smile.—

"Murdered him! my father an assassin!" cried the Marquis, "where? how? speak quickly, this is an important moment—"

"In the forest of Montnoir; for some trifling offence, during the *chasse*, he seized a moment when no one was near, and shot him through the heart. The deed was attributed to accident: my father was but a poor domestic; your's, a rich and powerful noble, whom none dared to disbelieve, and much less to charge with murder."

"How knew you this?" cried the Marquis eagerly.

"When he was ill, and supposed to be at the point of death, he confessed it," answered Ravillon; he promised as a recompense for a dear parent's loss, that he would leave me all his fortune: you were then disinherited; but when a reconciliation took place between you, his friendship cooled towards me, and every attention seemed to disgust him. We quitted Paris for Montnoir—" The agonies of guilt interrupted his articulation for several minutes,—when with a laboured respiration, he proceeded:

"Shortly after our arrival at the chateau, disputing on an indifferent subject, he reproached  
me

me with ingratitude, and threatened to withdraw his favour from me.—We parted : he retired to his chapel—the night was stormy—the spirit of revenge was busy—the Marquis was alone—beyond the reach of help—and—”

“ I comprehend thee ! ” interrupted de Sevrac ; “ the poniard ! ”—

“ With his own poniard ! ” repeated Ravillon, falling back in the arms of the trembling monk.

“ He has already confessed the dreadful deed,” said the father ; “ leave him to prayer.” Ravillon, starting up, resumed his narrative.

“ My hatred of the name of de Sevrac was nearly subdued by time and my change of fortune, when, from your hand, I received a blow. This insult, added to my jealousy of Paulina, and your refusal of an alliance with my son, determined me to destroy you. For this purpose I watched in the forest of Montnoir, and mistaking St. Clair for you, gave him the fatal wound which was the cause of your persecutions : his declaration that, *in any part of the world he should know the voice of the assassin*, involved him in the scene of ruin ; for with large sums of money, I bribed a desperate associate, who till the moment of his death never ceased with me, to follow you.”

“ Is your confederate dead ? ” inquired the Marquis.—

“ He was wounded near Monte Carelli : it was *Bazilio Dufanga*, the son of *Jaquitarra* : we were escaping after I had stabbed the good father *Evangelista*.”

As Ravillon pronounced these words, he was seized with the last pang of annihilation : he had only time to make a short appeal for mercy, before



before he sprung from his narrow bed, and rolled lifeless on the pavement ! The assassination of his son was unknown to him ; and the whole of the estate which he had obtained by the old Marquis's death returned to Sabina ; his personal property to his wife, Signora Paulina.

The monk informed de Sevrac, that Ravillon, after he was thrown overboard, buffeted the waves till he reached the shore, and was taken up entirely exhausted : the wound was not deep ; but the loss of blood prevented every chance of saving him. The corpse was left for interment, and the Marquis hastened to report the awful event to his daughter and Madame de Sevrac.

## C H A P. XXIV.

"The generous spark extinct revive,  
 "Teach me to love, and to forgive ;  
 "Exact my own defects to scan,  
 "What others are to feel ; and know myself a man !"

GRAY

WITH a mind strongly impressed by the horrors of the scene which he had just witnessed, the Marquis returned to the auberge, where he found Madame de Sevrac in the deepest affliction. During his absence, the Abbé Le Blanc had arrived at Naples, and with him, the venerable

nable Eustache ; the dreadful fate of de Fleury was cautiously concealed from his parent, who was also a stranger to his near relationship with Marianna. Lady Susan Montrose confided her will to the hands of Le Blanc before she quitted Florence, where the good Abbé had been the means of accomplishing that reconciliation, which proved so advantageous to Madame de Sevrac's peace of mind and fortune.

The corpse of Lady Susan was embarked for England ; Le Blanc and Eustache sailed in the same vessel, with orders to convey it to the family vault in Scotland. St. Clair was under the necessity of remaining with his wife, who was in a deep decline, at Naples, while the Marquis and the rest of the party proceeded towards Tuscany. De Sevrac had two motives for taking this route for England, the first, to discharge his debt of honour to the Count Monteleoni, and the second, to unfold the awful events attending the death of Monsieur Ravillon.

They travelled speedily, and never rested till they arrived to the lake Albano ; where Madame de Sevrac stopped for the night, merely to take leave of the amiable Abbess. It was near the close of day when they quitted their carriages ; and the Marquis, with Lemoine and Marianna, accompanied Madame de Sevrac and her daughter towards the monastery.

The silence of the hour, and the solitude of the situation, were congenial to the melancholy which pervaded Madame de Sevrac's mind. They strolled slowly along the winding path, till they came within sight of the convent, where, sitting in the small gothic porch, they beheld a young and beautiful nun, who was reading to  
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the abbess. So deeply were they both engaged, that they did not perceive the party advancing till they reached the spot; at that moment the nun raised her eyes, and the book dropped from her hand, while she shrieked and fainted on the threshold.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the Marquis, raising her, "it is Madame de Briancour!" the consternation was undecipherable: she remained for some time wholly subdued, till nature triumphed over sensibility, and the heart, throbbing with awakened conflicts, renewed its circulation. She opened her faint eyes, and feebly uttering—"Oh, D'Albert!" fell into the arms of Lemoine, who knelt before her, pale and astonished.

"Recalled from the grave, thou pure and gentle spirit," said D'Albert, "let this moment of painful recollection terminate all your sorrows: your husband is no more!"

Madame de Briancour's countenance expressed the anticipation of happiness which she was not destined to experience—"This habit which I wear," said she, "is merely probationary: the abbess knows my story, and will with joy release me."—D'Albert shrunk with agony—his hasty marriage had sealed the destiny of Madame de Briancour.—He had not power to disclose the fatal event, but embracing her for the last time, rushed out of the porch, and darted along the winding path.—The Marquis followed and overtook him.——"D'Albert," said he, seizing his hand, "is it possible, that my kind, my faithful friend, is the son of the gallant D'Albert?"

"Even so," replied Gaston, "and if you can cherish in your heart the promoter of freedom;

if

if you can esteem the enemy of despots : if prejudice is not still triumphant over experience, you will not withdraw that friendship from the republican D'Albert, which you bestowed upon the fugitive Lemoine."

The Marquis threw his arms on the neck of the noble and enlightened Gaston, and with a glorious energy, which was the offspring of reason and of truth, exclaimed—"Hubert de Sevrac is the convert of liberty ! the friend of human kind !"

The secret of D'Albert's marriage was unfolded to Madame de Briancour by the abbess ; and on the following week, she set out for Florence, where she took possession of her husband's property. Fortitude and resignation, in time, subdued her hopeless affection for Monsieur D'Albert, and she still lives, the delight and ornament of society.

Monsieur de Sevrac, on his arrival at Perugia, found Paulina's mental faculties considerably restored ; the conviction that the object of her derangement had not perished on a scaffold, and the knowledge that he was united to one, with whom he experienced the most perfect domestic happiness, strengthened her returning reason, and, in time, evinced the triumph of virtue over the turbulence of passion.

The party immediately proceeded to Florence ; where, on inquiry, they learnt that Signor Lupo was the ruffian whom D'Albert had mortally wounded in the forest near the lake Albano. In his last moments he confessed that Rosine had been the companion of his flight, and that he had destroyed her, in revenge, for her having betrayed him. De Sevrac and his family sailed from Leghorn,



Leghorn, for England ; where the Abbé Le Blanc, and the venerable Eustache de Fleury, became the partners of his prosperity. A few months after their arrival, St. Clair returned a widower ; and the virtues of Sabina de Sevrac were rewarded by an union with the object of her affections.

So terminated the eventful history ; which exhibits a series of misfortunes, the *effects* of those CAUSES, which cannot fail to prove, that however exalted the aggressor, the hour of retribution is inevitable ; that energy and philosophy will triumph over adventitious claims ; and, that—

“ Whoever 'midst the fons

“ Of REASON, VALOUR, LIBERTY, or VIRTUE

“ Displays distinguished MERIT, is a NOBLE

“ Of NATURE'S OWN CREATING !”

THOMSON.

FINIS.